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Tamás Kozma · Magdolna Rébay
Andrea Óhidy · Éva Szolár *Editors*

The Bologna Process in Central and Eastern Europe



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Introduction

Wolfgang Hörner

What interest may have a book about the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe? It is obvious to assume that the Bologna process in the participating countries of Eastern Europe takes on different features and has different functions compared with ‘core Europe’, from where the Bologna process was initiated. The following articles, consisting of nine national studies and two theoretical articles seeking to interpret the development of the Bologna process, actually show to what extent the assumption that, “Bologna is very different in Central and Eastern Europe” is in fact the case. However, they also suggest that astonishing parallels exist between the two regions of Europe.

A first difference, which the authors unanimously highlight, is immediately obvious. In Western Europe, the creation of the common European Higher Education Area was primarily intended to coordinate the higher education systems of the participating States through a process of structural standardization. In all post-communist societies, however, another motive is at the forefront; the Bologna process is part of an overall political transformation, a break with the old system. As a result, depending on the geopolitical situation of the country, it either represents a step towards further integration into the European Union of those countries being already members of the EU, or at the very least, a form of “catch-up Europeanization” – a movement towards the EU for countries that are not yet EU members.

However, some authors point out a puzzling paradox. The political upheaval in Eastern Europe was in many cases connected to a recovery or even a re-creation (e.g. Ukraine) of nation-states. This is true, in the literal sense, of the post-Soviet states, which (re)gained their independence when they left the Soviet Union. It is

also true in a more figurative sense, for the new EU members of Central and Eastern Europe, which were released from the Soviet sphere of influence and thus regained their actual sovereignty: yet as some authors have observed, these countries paradoxically were relatively anxious to give up this independence in favour of new supranational bonds (such as the EU). We must note however, that since the 19th Century national universities have contributed significantly to the formation of national identity.

In this contradiction between national(language) universities as promoters of national identity, and the transnational Bologna process, one can see a general paradox in regards to the concept of education itself. Education is, in and of itself, a paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand, in so far as it sees itself in the tradition of the Enlightenment, it pursues universalist ideals. Yet on the other hand, since the emergence of nation-states in the 19th century, each individual national education system was designed to differentiate itself from that of its neighbours in order to support the process of nation-building (cf. Hörner 2010a, 1). Thus, higher education merely reflects the position of the concept of education in general.

These conflicts are present to a greater extent in the Central and Eastern European participants in the Bologna process than in the Western European states. This is because in some countries of Central and Eastern Europe this problem is even greater by the special role of national minorities and minority languages. The restoration of national educational systems collides in part with the rights of minorities because through the Bologna process the universities of minorities need a national accreditation. This fact increases their dependence on the mainstream university system. Some aspects of the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe are however surprisingly similar to the experiences in Western Europe, even if the Central and Eastern European authors themselves do not always perceive this.

Among those aspects the most striking one is the failing to achieve the principle goal of significantly improving student (and teacher) mobility, a goal that was publically promoted as being one of the main objectives of the reform of the European Higher Education Area. As in Western Europe – and Germany is almost a perfect example – student mobility among the Bologna participants in Central and Eastern Europe has been increasingly hindered for the majority of students due not only to a lack of financial resources but also, paradoxically, due to curricular differences which were accentuated by the modular structure of the three-stage post-secondary system, to such an extent that a substantive recognition of foreign study content is impeded rather than facilitated.

Resistance to the reform is similar among professors who are not satisfied with the downgrading of their role in the reform process. They are merely executing agents who are to teach the reformed curriculum. As far as professors had traditionally academic teaching freedoms these have been significantly restricted. Like their German colleagues the Central-and Eastern European authors too find that the traditional features of the University in the ‘Humboldtian’ tradition have been lost through the Bologna process.

Controversial is the economic dimension of the reform. While some of the authors criticize implicitly or explicitly the influence of business on the University in the Bologna process, others soberly recognize that, especially in traditional university systems, the three-year Bachelor Degree does not yet have the societal recognition that the reformers expect. In fact, the Bachelor Degree has a very hard time demonstrating that its graduates can compete on the labour market. This seems, not unlike the situation in Germany, to be the case particularly in countries that, in contrast to the British context, traditionally have a structured concept of “vocation” (in opposition to the simple “job”), i.e. it is expected that a diploma is associated with complete, immediately applicable professional qualifications - unlike in Anglo-Saxon countries where "employ-

ability" means that new employees are first trained, "on the job", to fulfil their concrete tasks in the plant. On the other hand, the authors of the volume stress that within the international framework of the Bologna process it is possible to set very different national objectives. Depending on individual national situations and stages of development of higher education, some states are carrying out their already planned reforms of Higher Education under the protective umbrella of the Bologna process. The Bologna process is used for the realization of their own goals in educational policy. On closer inspection, this feature too is not limited to the Central and Eastern European situation. Similar observations can be made also in Western Europe (as some authors have noted explicitly). They point out that the Bologna process had its origin in the Sorbonne Declaration, an initiative of the then French minister of Higher Education J. Attali. He tried to push through his reform project of Higher Education, which was highly unpopular among the academic circles, by declaring it as a common project of several European States. Initially four core countries of Europe participated in the project, but then it increasingly gained in momentum with more and more countries within and outside of the EU. With the inclusion of countries outside the European Union in the Bologna process, the EU also found a lever to overturn the interdiction to harmonize the education sector within its member states, and even more to extend its influence in educational policy, and particularly policy of Higher Education, far beyond the borders of the European Union – you may note that even Kazakhstan is a member of the Bologna process. The Bologna process appears at least as pan-European, perhaps even more as a global process directed by Europe, a process which is formally not under the responsibility of the EU and therefore it is not bound by the restrictions of the EU's education policy contracts. When one of the authors (V. Tomusk) in an overall summary interpretation of the Bologna process states, that the difficulties the Bologna process encounters in Central and Eastern

Europe are not primarily to be found in the technical and organizational realms, but rather within the complex interaction of (educational) cultures and (educational) politics in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, his interpretation coincides with our finding made two years ago from the perspective of comparative education research (Hörner 2010b, 106) corroborated by our own practical experience when introducing of the Bologna structures in the university of Leipzig. In the implementation of the Bologna process in Germany, a specific academic culture – namely Anglo-Saxon behaviourism, which is based on complex, but perceivably measurable skills – collides with an academic culture which is influenced by German legislation about examinations, which is subject to the constraint that all examination results must be undisputable. So in Germany there is a tendency to avoid labour-intensive complex testing of behavioural goals (which are actually the proclaimed module objectives) in favour of taking as object of the examination process selective fact testing. In doing so the actual progress of modularization, which lies in a scaffolded development of sets of competences of practical relevance, is reduced to absurdity. Once again, a basic fact of comparative education is made clear, namely that careful analysis is necessary when transferring apparently identical structures into different contexts. This analysis is important in order to see which contextual conditions are necessary in order to achieve the expected purpose.

Through the overall picture that emerges from the national studies on the one hand and the interpretation on the other hand, it is not surprising that Central and Eastern European observers can also come to a critical conclusion. The relocation of the university as an important sphere of Culture into the sphere of Economics – possibly dominated by the economic interests of Eurocrats – is likely to jeopardize the cultural roots of the European University (see the summary of the contribution Tomusk). Again, the analyses from the East, coincide with critical German voices (in this case,

the voice of the author of this introduction himself) who reminds us the Humboldtian principle of the “emancipatory function of Higher Education as a social corrective” (Hörner 2010b, 107) a principle which in the excitement of the Bologna process should not be forgotten.

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The Bologna Process in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative View

Tamás Kozma

After the first decade of the Bologna process, the literature talks mainly about the extent to which the original objectives have been met. The literature also deals with the great amount of work still to be done to reach the initial targets (see Trends I-V). This paper takes a different stand. It will analyse the Bologna process as a process of political events in selected Central and Eastern European countries' higher education. The reason for this unusual view is simple. The Bologna process has a different meaning in Central and Eastern Europe than in the rest of the Continent. The Bologna process became an element of the economic, social and political change sometimes called the 'system change' (cf. Johnson 1996), or more regularly the 'transition' (Kozma, Polonyi 2004). Recent higher education reforms can only be understood, if they are put within the context of this long and painful political process. The Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe is not only a higher education reform. It is part of this system change.

Since the Bologna process is part of the wider process of transformation, it has to be viewed as a political process. The relevant approach to the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe is the political science approach. This paper will analyse the agents as well as their interests and efforts in the course of events. The Bologna process will therefore be presented as the outcome of various actions and efforts in the higher education policy area of Central and Eastern Europe. The basis of this analysis is a series of case studies of higher education of selected countries of the region. The original studies reflected the Bologna process, where it succeeded and where it failed in the second part of the first decade of the 2000s (Kozma, Rébay 2008). Their follow-up versions can be

found in the present volume. Most of the statements in this paper refer to those case studies and their findings. To analyse case studies for international comparison, one must consider the methodology of discourse and critical discourse analysis (see Roger 2011). Comparatists must not forget that most of their material is educational policy discourse. When we compare systems or policies (in education as well as in other areas of social and political life) we have to draw our attention to the following fact: Even statistical data – let alone narrative presentation of a system or policy – are social constructions created by those who are responsible for the particular system or policy. The ‘trustworthiness’ of the material is the question which the critical discourse analysis tries to answer (Hülse 2003). Discourses do have their own rules independent of the field they present. They develop according to their own rules regardless of the field they present. This holds entirely true regarding our cases dealing with the Bologna process in Eastern Europe. Our cases are not government texts, rather they have been collected mostly at institutional level. They have been created by former institutional leaders and administrators. However, they are still discourses having been constructed by selected agents of the political game called the Bologna process. To apply critical discourse analysis is therefore crucial, when we use those case studies for international comparisons (See also Donati 1992).

The structure of this study is the following:

- First, it introduces the agents of the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe, that is, the international (supranational) and national organisations, the institutions and the professional and interest groups inside them.
- Second, this paper reveals the special (political) interests (both manifested and latent) of those agents in the Bologna process.
- Third, the non-government institutions and their special interests will be involved. Non-government higher education essen-

tially differs from government (state or national) higher education in Central and Eastern Europe. Dealing with their special problems, the weaknesses of the Bologna process can be demonstrated.

- The concluding part of the paper offers a summary of the differences between the Bologna process in the ‘East’ and the ‘West’.

The agents of the Bologna process

Government organisations. The main agents of the Bologna process are, without question, the governments. The higher education reform in Central and Eastern Europe is a government initiated and controlled change; The Bologna process is a top-down reform (Alesi et al. 2005). To foster the Bologna process, some governments set up buffer organisations. In the course of events, however, the buffer organizations start independent lives and act according to their own interests and rations? The growing distances between the national governments and their buffer organisations give the impression that the Bologna process is managed by the buffer organisations. Here are some examples: The Ministry for Education and Science of Ukraine set up a so-called national team to follow-up the Bologna process. A committee called ‘Joining the European Higher Education Area’ was formed in Hungary in 2002. In Slovakia all the buffer organisations were integrated into the Institution of Educational Information and Prognostics in Bratislava. As a result of the emerging buffer organisation, the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe is being formed in cooperation and conflicts between governments and their buffer organisations. In other words, governments and their semi-independent buffer organisations simulate a ‘political arena’ for the Bologna process. The Bologna process – as the official higher education reforms of

Central and Eastern Europe – runs in this simulated political place. It seems as if the governments and their buffer organisations were the only agents of the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe. It also seems as if ‘higher education policy’ was formed entirely by the governmental policy makers in cooperation – sometimes in conflict though – with their buffer organisations. It seems as if the concept ‘education policy’ refers entirely to the policies of the governments. (This interpretation stems from the communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe which monopolised the political processes and centralised decision-making.)

Institutional agents. There are, however, other agents (sometimes called ‘stake-holders’) in the Bologna process. They are, of course, the institutions. The institutions play sometimes visible, sometimes invisible roles in the process. When they play a visible role, the governments (and their buffer organisations, the original players in the game) feel, they lose control. And they are probably right. The third parties – in this case the institutions – may direct the Bologna process in new directions, away from the original targets set by the governments. The most visible/or semi-visible/invisible institutional agents are the heads of the institutions. Heads of universities and colleges have a strong – even decisive – influence on higher education reforms. This creates a political environment where the final outcomes of the Bologna process depend mostly or at least partly on the institutions. Higher education policies of former Yugoslavia are typical with regard to this. During the former regime, the university faculties became gradually independent. The national higher education acts adopted by the post-Yugoslavian states between 2000 and 2006 created a ‘corporate model’ (universities formed an ‘umbrella organisation’ covering independent faculties).

This development reflects the ‘self-governance’ which has a long tradition in the Balkans and which became the official ideology of Tito’s Yugoslavia.)

Students. The students are also ‘policy makers’; and as such they are also agents of the Bologna process (ESIB 2005; 2007). They are represented by their national associations in the decision making bodies of the universities in Central and Eastern Europe. These student organisations – unlike others in Western Europe – have originally been formed by the communist parties after the 1968 youth unrests of the region (the best-known of which was the ‘Prague Spring’). Controlled by the Communist Party’s youth organisations, the student bodies took part – at least in a formal way – in the institutional decision-making process. This continued to be the case after the transition of 1989/90. Their ideology was and still remained that of a ‘self-governed’ institution. According to this ideology, all members (called ‘citizens’) of the given university have the right to participate in the institutional decision-making process (Ruegg 1993-2004, see especially vol. II, ch. IV). Despite of this, the real participation of the Central and Eastern European students in the Bologna process is to ‘vote by foot’. They either join the students’ mobility programs - or more regularly stay away from them. The student mobility scheme is usually described as one of the unquestionable successes of the Bologna process (see Teichler 2011). Students’ mobility in East-Central Europe is, however, rather a failure (as could have been predicted long before the Bologna process, cf. Kozma 1993).

This failure is explained by three causes. One of them is financial. Neither students nor universities in Central and Eastern Europe receive enough financial support for foreign studies (thus Croatia set up a fund for this aim). If more financial support arrived – it is argued –, more student mobility could be expected. The second reason is organisational. The credit system of the Central and Eastern European institutions does not promote foreign studies, rather it makes them difficult. Credits acquired outside the national systems are difficult to get accepted. (The ‘European Credit Transfer System’ might be a solution.) The third reason is communica-

tion and the new role of the national languages in the region. They hold the new-born national identities after the long period of communist internationalism. At the same time they prevent communication among Eastern and Western students and institutions. Western language competencies have essentially been growing among students of Central and Eastern Europe, however they are still not good enough to help students integrating into the 'European higher education area'. For one reason or the other, students of Central and Eastern Europe have not been touched by the Bologna process. For the time being they cannot or do not want to get involved in international programmes, programmes that were designed for them by the founders of the 'European higher education area' in the project (student mobility), that is the main message of the Bologna process.

The academic circles. The academic circles of Central and Eastern Europe were not involved in the initial design of the Bologna process. The Bologna process – as it emerged from the official biannual meetings – was a product of the government circles. The academic staff participated (in some places and at some times they were rather pushed) in the implementation phase only, during which time the new study programmes were drafted (Kehm, Teichler 2006). So the involvement of Academia in the Bologna process was reduced to their activities as curriculum planners and developers. One can even say that the higher education of Central and Eastern Europe inherited from the 19th century was restructured by the curriculum developers – that is, the academics. Left at the margin of the political struggles, Academia has become highly critical of the Bologna process. It fulfils the role a teacher fulfilled four decades earlier, when they criticised the great school reforms of the 1960s (Husén, Boalt 1967).

The better organised they (academics) are, the better they can protect their interests against the emerging 'managerialisms', which seem to be enlightened modernisation and which support the Bolo-

gna process wholeheartedly. Since the Bologna process is communicated in Central and Eastern Europe as an effort to ‘catch up’ with Europe, academics who criticise it, seem to hinder this ‘Europeanisation’ process.

Employers. The graduates’ wishes to find a job and the employers’ needs to find new candidates are continuously referred to in Central and Eastern Europe. Career advice in organized forms exists in few countries e.g. in Austria, Hungary or Serbia. ‘Labour market needs’ are among the arguments for the creation of the bachelor cycle, otherwise unknown to the traditional Central and Eastern European universities. The agents outside the realms of higher education, however, were left out of the modernisation process. It seems as if the whole the Bologna process was an issue of close-knit higher education circles.

The Bologna process as a political game

The quest for legitimacy. Keeping all this in mind, the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe can be viewed as the result of conflicting interests. However, the interest groups in and around higher education struggle not only for their own interests, they also struggle for transition. The concept of ‘transition’, though, is interpreted in various, sometimes, conflicting ways. Transition and transformation may lead to new national identities and new independence (interpretation A); or they can lead from old imperial structures (the Soviet Union) to new international ones (NATO, the EU). Being in conflict, both interpretations look for powerful governments either for rebuilding the old national identities or for negotiating membership in the international organisations.

The governments of the falling regimes lost their power and legitimacy together with the collapsing orders. The governments of

Central and Eastern Europe now take the Bologna process as a tool for new legitimacy.

Manifest aims – hidden agendas. This is the reason why the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe is explained mainly as a chain of government decisions. Being kept far away from the general public (other possible agents of the game), ‘government decisions’ emerge from the realm of government and buffer organisations. The conflicting interests are expressed as manifest objectives, while other interests remain hidden. The official goals of the Bologna process are common all over Europe. While the official aim of the Bologna process is unanimously accepted all over Central and Eastern Europe (“entering the European higher education area”), each national government has its own agenda. The Bologna process is therefore used as a unified umbrella on the various national agendas. For example, there are attempts to limit the autonomy of university faculties in former Yugoslavia, or to shrink mass higher education in Slovakia and Hungary. Many governments want to create a national higher education system which is different from the others’, and thus would become a symbol of national independence. To strengthen the national identity in Ukraine or to reinforce the political legitimacy of the education policy in Serbia or Hungary, hidden agendas have manifested themselves as ‘the logical results of the Bologna process.

Bureaucratic or market coordination? The Bologna process is kept on the move mainly by offices, governments and buffer organisations that mediate between the institutions and the governments. The changes in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe have been bureaucratically initiated. It is a top-down bureaucratic rather than a bottom-up process launched by the institutions themselves and the market forces around them. The Bologna process is a top-down bureaucratic process everywhere. In Central and Eastern Europe, however, it is closely connected with the new, emerging powers of the educational governments. New (higher)

education acts that incorporate the manifest aims of the Bologna process are adopted sooner or later – showing when and how the respective governments are able to control the higher education institutions (Slovenia: 1999–2004; Slovakia: 2002; Ukraine: 2002; Croatia: 2003–2004; Serbia: 2005; Hungary: 2005–06; Romania 2006). The means and tools supporting (or even pushing) the Bologna process ahead differ from system to system. One extreme is the way the Serbian educational government acts under the name of ‘the Bologna process’; the other extreme may be the Ukrainian Bologna process (weak vs. tough government policies using the Bologna process for nation building). The government policies in Slovakia or in Hungary are in between the two (more international involvement, fewer nation-building efforts). The differences are rooted not only in history (more or less authoritarian governments), but also in each country’s relationship with the European Union. Governments that have already joined the European Union use the Bologna process to strengthen their legitimacy internationally. Governments which are still far from EU membership use the Bologna process as a facade for the building of their own national higher education systems.

‘Catching up’ and drifting. The Bologna process has arrived in Western Europe gradually. The higher education systems have joined the reform step by step. It was the original design of the change planned and signed by the ministers of education in Bologna, Italy, in 1999. It reflects how they thought of the Bologna process. It happened, however, in another way in Central and Eastern Europe. Since various governments have joined the Bologna process at various times after 1999, they have always been in a rush to ‘catch up’. They had to make more than one decision at the time, they had to speed up the process. These decisions were forced upon the institutions, which reinforced their resistance.

All this gets ‘politicized’ under the circumstances of the transformation. Successes were seen as breakthroughs of the transition;

while problems of the Bologna process were considered failures of the political and social transition. Becoming a crucial matter of the political transition and societal transformation, the Bologna process in the region ended up not in a process of modernisation, but in a policy of drifting.

Here are some examples for the policy of drifting: The Bologna process in Ukraine – in spite of the manifest aims – serves to strengthen the identity of the nation state by rebuilding the higher education inherited from a Soviet model to a national Ukrainian one. The Bologna process in Serbia serves as a tool and a political slogan for reintegrating the deeply decentralised institutions, and thus to empower the decentralised governmental decision-making process in higher education. The Slovenian Bologna process is also taking place in a decentralised political environment. The educational government is looking for new authorities by its international integration; at the same time the institutional level is remaining decentralised. The Bologna process in Croatia serves partly as a means of the government's international policies and partly as an argumentation for the on-going massification of higher education. While (as mentioned) the Bologna process in Slovakia as in Hungary serves exactly the opposite. It has become a reference of a new government strife, that is, the shrinking of the system.

Governments which are drifting between the search for a national identity of the 1990s and the EU integration of the 2000s, use the Bologna process for their own purposes in the region. The Bologna process has been used everywhere as an element of the political transformation (domestic politics) and as an element of the 'Europeanisation' (international politics). Drifting between this Scylla and Caryptis, the socio-economic transformation of the region has become a matter of international politics with the help of the Bologna process.

Minorities: new stake holders in the Bologna process

Minority higher education. If we look at it as a political game, the Bologna process has the same stake holders both in Western and Eastern Europe. Central and Eastern Europe is different with regard to this, too. The unusual stake holders – important, though rarely mentioned – actors are the Central and Eastern European minorities (national, ethnic, religious etc. communities). Central and Eastern Europe is full of national minorities. Their problems, however, do not appear in the Bologna process. The Bologna process goes on without even saying a word about minority higher education. The issue is not even realised at relevant international forums; as if they did not even realise the existence of those communities in Europe. And if the international structures acknowledged the problem, they would just leave it to the national governments to solve it. The issue of minorities does not appear in the Bologna process as a European question, rather as a problem for the national higher education systems.

‘Minority education’ refers to all (higher) education forms that are run or required by a minority of a given society. There are two such groups in Central and Eastern Europe: national (minority) communities and the (Christian) churches. Thus ‘minority (higher) education’ in this region means (higher) education that is kept up for, owned by and referring to the needs of certain ethnic communities or church institutions of the region. Churches and nationalities (national/ethnic communities) are often tightly bound to each other. They are split into orthodox national churches; the Ukrainian, Romanian and Serbian orthodox churches are the biggest in the examined region. Consequently Romanian, Ukrainian or Serbian minorities – where they exist – are usually orthodox minorities at the same time. Similarly, protestant churches are also tightly bound to nationalities that are almost exclusively Hungarian national communities. Catholics – in contrast to them – are international.

Some churches, however, interweave more and more with the political entity in which they function – Slovak, Slovenian, Croatian or Hungarian Catholics, Romanian, Ukrainian (Russian) Orthodox Christians. This special connection between religious and national communities results in the ambiguity of the issue. Sometimes it seems to be a national issue, at other times a question of faith-based education. Institutions run by national communities are often church institutions; faith-based higher education is sometimes established for national communities. It is one of the specialities of the higher education policy-making in Central and Eastern Europe (cf. Kozma 2005). This is especially so since the transition.

The position of minority institutions in the national higher education system is influenced by traditions and has a dynamic character. Experts – mainly in the American literature (Levy, Slantcheva 2007) – celebrate the appearance of minority higher education in the national systems as the spring of private provisions in the higher education systems. To them, those private provisions are a clear characteristic of political liberty and an educational ‘market’ where institutions of various types may compete. Opposite to this idealistic picture (Kozma 2004), private provisions are mostly the legal forms of the faith-based higher education, which, in turn, may also be the new appearance of higher education of minority communities.

Minority higher education and the transformation process. Previous regulations lost effect or at least loosened during the first stage of the transformation process. (See Kozma, Polonyi 2004 about the stages of the transformation in Central and Eastern Europe.) The first stage of this transformation occurred sometime between 1988 and 1994. With the exception of Hungary and Romania, the previous political states had fallen apart, while new political entities were emerging. The elites of these new political entities, however, were inherited from the previous regimes. Their political objectives had been formed long before the transition, during

the old regimes (where they created the ‘democratic oppositions’). Being new to the emerging new world, those elites followed their traditional goals: to find a third way between Communism and Capitalism. These efforts are called the ‘Third Way Concept’ in Central and Eastern Europe. It has a long tradition which goes back to the 19th century political debates. The ‘Third Way’ movements of the region involve ideas such as self-governance, direct democracy, collective rights, self-supplying communities, and heated fights against any kind of government intervention in civic life. In the political vacuum of the first stage of transition – when old governments lost their power and the new ones had not received it yet – an explosion of higher education started. Among others, private higher education institutions appeared in many forms in the region. Peculiar formations were the community (local, regional) colleges or ‘local universities’ which aimed to satisfy the local needs that had already been present for a long time, but had been neglected by the central (party and government) authorities. The leaders of those movements turned their political ambitions towards creating higher education institutions at that historical moment. They were mainly supported by the churches or the national minorities.

The second stage of the transformation was the consolidation (from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s). In those years a second elite entered the political arena, which aimed at the integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the European Union. While the previous elite had focused on independence and national identity, the new elite urged the integration into international organisations and a globalised market. This period brought consolidation for higher education, as shown by the adaptations of the first higher education acts (Slovakia 1990, Ukraine 1991, Slovenia and Hungary 1993, Croatia 1994, Romania 1996). Those consolidation acts aimed at rebuilding the national institutions of higher education in the new nation states of Central and Eastern Europe. They also determined the place and role of private higher education. Contrary to

great expectations, private higher education has not become a leading sector but played a complementary role only. Local institutions created under irregular conditions either integrated into the national system or were marginalized. Many of them could only survive when financial and (or) political supporters could be found. The process presented a real danger to the local interest groups, who organised the local institutions so as to meet the local educational needs.

Minority higher education and the Bologna process. The Bologna process started at the second stage of the transformation process. This explains its regional specificities as well as why it was successful in one country but failed in another. It determined the minority institutions and their perspectives. Three strategies can be identified and applied.

Strategy A is a strategy of integration into the national system. The minority institutions which want to have national support – both financial and political – are pushed into full integration. The way to fully integrate into the national system is to participate in the national accreditation system, to follow the necessary prescriptions, to comply with the national requirements. National requirements refer to the requirements of majority higher education, including the use of the majority language, the majority norms and the majority cultures. By following the rules of the majority (national) higher education, the minority institutions lose the local support. It would not meet the needs of the local public – be it a national or a religious community. Becoming elements of the national system, the minority institutions not only lose their local (regional) support; they also lose the authority originating from the services of the local public. While gaining a national legitimacy, the minority institutions lose the original mission for which they had been established.

Strategy B is a strategy of separation. The Bologna process strengthens the national systems; by its support the national sys-

tems become not only the systems of the majority, rather the each of them the ‘one, best system’ of a nation’s higher education. Fighting for separation would throw the minority institutions into the margin, or rather it would push them out of the system of higher education. If they do not accept the national accreditation (to mention but one) they will not be entitled to grant degrees. If they did not join the national ‘league table’ of higher education ranking, they would lose (!) most of their students (or at least the best). Keeping the local ties – serving the local communities and their identity needs – the minority institutions would easily lose track of their original mission as an institution for higher learning. They may remain in the service of the local community – not as a higher education institution but as an institution of local culture and folkloric activities. The danger of strategy B is the loss of the minority institution as a place of higher learning.

Is there a ‘third way’ between those two? An optional strategy C might be a sign of integration not into the national system of the given country but the integration into an alternative higher education system or network. If strategy C did really exist, it would ease the tensions of both strategies, A and B. The national institutions might be integrated into a larger system without giving up their oppositional status against that of the majority system. They would also serve their founders without being separated and, thus, be destroyed. Strategy C is still only an idea rather than reality. However, there are clear signs for it being it. Minority institutions might be accredited alternatively (e.g. by the accreditation agency of the neighbouring country, where the national community does not represent a minority but is holding majority status). Faith-based institutions might be accredited by church agencies (the strongest of them being the Roman Catholic Church with its agency). Local institutions may create virtual communities for accrediting the members of the given networks.

Although the Bologna process aims at creating a ‘European higher education area’, it supports and strengthens the national systems. The Bologna process is not sensitive towards civic initiatives, market-type competitions or private provisions in higher education. It does not know minority communities and grass root institutions (‘newborn universities’). An unintended result of this forced national integration in higher education might be the struggle for alternative networks. This way the Bologna process in Central and Eastern Europe has initiated its own alternatives.

Last but not least: why is (higher) education so important for the national/ethnic/church communities in Central and Eastern Europe? The answer lies in the dual function of education. Education is partly a community action, and partly, an action of the state. As a community action education – mainly in its non-formal and informal types – intends to share the culture and to integrate the new members into the collective. At this stage education is always going on, in various forms, in different time and in all places of the community. Education is, therefore, a condition for the community life and as such it doesn’t need governmental intervention (rather, it protects itself against any kind of outside intervention. For that reason, education – in its broad sense – is the unavoidable condition for minority living and development. Education, on the other hand is a function of the state; formal education is a vehicle that transports government messages, rules and ideologies to the minority communities. In this sense, education is a symbol of the political existence. If formal education exists, a political entity may exist. Formal education – schooling and training – is, therefore, important for a minority community for two reasons: First, it is a condition of living, a means of transmitting the cultural heritage including narratives of identity and the language. Second, it is a symbol that the given community has not only cultural identity but a political identity, too. When arguing in favour of government supported and accepted minority (higher) education, the manifest argumentation is

usually is usually that culture and language are to be protected. The hidden strife behind this manifest argumentation is, though, political. Having a formal minority education the community may have its political identity too. Minority (higher) education is, therefore, a symbol of the political existence of a community; a symbol for the political entity of the given national, ethnic or church community.

Summary

At the turn of the millennium, the Bologna process was and still is an effort of the European Union to extend their territory of educational and cultural influence and to create a unified European Higher Education Area. A decade after its beginnings, the successes and failures of the effort can be analysed critically. This is the aim of the present paper. Our special interest is the Eastern part of Europe, the new member states or, in other words, the emerging democracies that underwent a transformation after the political change of 1990. The Bologna process, for them is not only a higher education reform, rather, an element of their economic and political transformation. It is, therefore, a political process and has to be analysed accordingly. The Bologna process started in the region right in the middle of the political transformation (in its second stage), and contributed to the reinforcement of the national governments and the national higher education systems. At the first period of the transformation (the transition process) the revitalised nation-states of the region looked after their own national identities. They rebuilt their higher education in order to differ from one another and to symbolise the national independence. In contrast of those efforts, the Bologna process guided them – sometimes even pushed them – into the opposite direction. The Bologna process initiated integration into the European Higher Education Area, in other words, to ‘catch up’ with Europe at least as far as higher edu-

cation is concerned. The quest for national identities on the one hand and the strife for European integration on the other create a catch for the region's higher education policies. Higher education policy makers would like to save their national systems, at the same time they are looking for international recognition. This double responsibility and double engagement makes the Bologna process so unique in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Bologna process contributes to the new empowering of the governments of Central and Eastern Europe. However, it also has to face a "third party" of higher education policy making in Central and Eastern Europe – the national communities with minority status. They developed their separate institutions and systems during the transition and today they are trying to protect them against the Bologna process -supported 'nationalisation'. It is not an easy game. Strategy A is the integration into the given national system; strategy B is being left outside. Some think, there is a third strategic option: alternative accreditations and recognitions. It would be essential for those institutions with minority status since education has a double function. It is conveying the cultural heritage from generation to generation (a cultural function). But it also symbolises the political identity of a community with a minority status within the majority society.

Note

Some of the ideas of the concluding study have been developed and formed out in a former paper (see *Kozma 2008*).

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European Higher Education Considering Gellner, Malinowski and Wittgenstein

Voldemar Tomusk

*A shepherd boy who plays the
“The Internationale” on a whistle is not
necessarily a communist.*

Mats Traat

Expressions of ideologies are easier to imitate than to internalize the ideologies themselves. Not everybody humming Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” in an Amsterdam coffee shop is necessarily a European federalist, although some may well be. Building cultures requires time, and even destroying them and sinking social institutions takes major, often violent effort. Building a European system of higher education is a more complex matter than the instruments invented for the purpose so far would necessarily suggest. Histories and cultures cannot be undone or invented merely by means of decrees, even if issued from very high offices.

The Bologna process is often presented as a simple technical matter – as a matter of implementing a relatively short list of actions in order to converge (but decidedly not to harmonize!) higher education structures across the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration. Authoritative voices have been heard requesting to keep the Process focused exactly on this avoiding, for example, discussing the meaning of reforming contentless structures. A crusader of the Process should exclude even the slightest slippage into philosophical speculation from the very outset, as a likely conclusion of the inevitable impact of structures on the content would render the initiative illegal on the grounds of a breach of the principle of university autonomy. Olsen (2005) reports on the European Commission’s frustration in its attempts to discuss university ad-

ministration, instead of solving technical questions in the context of shared goals. Administrators, as we know full well, are not to be questioned by academics in any other context than an administrative science seminar room. Or to put it slightly differently – any discussion among academics that could possibly have an impact on university administrative practices is to be avoided.

One may see the narrowing of the task down to technical work on structural matters as a rational approach to building the European system of higher education. The issue, however, is more complex than that. It has been just over half a century since a significant part of Europe has finally been relatively peaceful, benefiting from the presence of the US armed forces and the mobilizing impact of the “barbarians” at its gates. The latter has changed recently, while the former shows signs of hesitation every now and then. Once we remember the massacres, including the two bloodiest wars in human history Europe experienced, one may suddenly come to think that there is more to European integration than agricultural subsidies to French farmers or what is even worse – that devastating wars on European soil are historically still too close to allow discussing matters other than those related to structures on the surface. It does not, however, go entirely unnoticed that the latter – at times – takes on laughable forms, such as regulating the bend of the bananas allowed to be imported or the size of the potatoes eligible for the above mentioned subsidies. Life in Europe would be less humorous, if the European publics agreed on a grand political design for Europe’s future. For better or worse, so far the Europeans have not agreed on such a design, and the federal structure of the European Union is moving forward more by means of an elitist conspiracy than through broad democratic deliberations and public support.

The Bologna process offers a useful example of the problems further European integration is facing, as well as of sub-optimal solutions for overcoming problems such as the reluctance of the

member states of the European Union to delegate competence in higher education to the Community level. The latter is no more a simple technical matter, as it takes us right to the core of many of Europe's concerns – nationalisms and the manner in which universities as central cultural institutions and intellectuals relate to the cultures of the nations and the political legitimacy of the nation states.

Some people of significant wisdom and experience would recommend rather avoiding such issues in the hope that once technical means transcending the current institutional constellations are put in place, the past will fade away against the blinding brightness of the future. This author tends to disagree – the past does not fade away just by not mentioning it for about a hundred years. Recent conflicts in the Balkans offer a powerful reminder of the durability of a collective human memory and its possible effects. It may be more painful, but inevitable to talk about the past as well as plans for the future, to make sure that these plans have the necessary public support.

An elitist conspiracy as an alternative to building a broad public support to a particular program means limiting freedom as Malinowski understood it – the freedom to agree on the purpose of an organized activity, the freedom to implement the agreed activity and the freedom to share the fruits of the action among those who have participated in it (Malinowski 1947, 91). In case of a hypothetical elitist conspiracy, the freedom to agree on the purpose of an activity is denied to those expected to implement it. Perhaps somebody else will decide upon the distribution of the fruits, too. A man from a high office may obviously argue that in our days global economic competition does not allow the luxury of such freedom and, unless Europe mobilizes its capacities as if in a war, it will drop out of the race. Students of manipulation of the masses are not likely to find anything particularly new in such arguments. It is always an external threat – Communism before and the rise of the

Chinese economy more recently, which is expected to create a context for European integration. Below we are making a modest attempt to taste the fruit forbidden to academics of our times, by placing the European higher education project into the context of some major twentieth century concerns. We are following the lead offered by Ernest Gellner – “one of the last great Central European polymath intellectuals” – reaching out to Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bronislaw Malinowski, and from the three of them to European higher education.

The three tenors of fallen Europe – Ernest Gellner, Bronislaw Malinowski and Ludwig Wittgenstein

Throughout his academic life Gellner repeatedly returned to the ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bronislaw Malinowski, identifying Wittgenstein as the source of the two main intellectual flaws of our times, and Malinowski as one who was able to see the way forward for the world despite its imperfections. We will take this as our starting point, although the conclusions may turn out somewhat different. Wittgenstein and Malinowski appear together in the titles of several of Gellner’s writings. As a humble tribute to the great scholar, his own appearance in the title of this paper together with both luminaries is more than justified.

In his “Words and Things” Gellner launched a devastating criticism on Wittgenstein and the Oxford Saturday morning linguistic “armchair philosophy”, disappointing the philosophical establishment to the degree that they found it better to ignore the work altogether. The spirit of Ludwig Wittgenstein, however, may be well alive more than half a century later. In our times it seems indeed as if everything was a Wittgensteinian language game – including European higher education policy discourse. It is no longer an issue whether academic research has anything to do with the

truth. The question is rather how to get away with what one says, and as long as one is able to get away with a statement, the point made is being considered valid. Much of the recent Bologna process propaganda presented as “scientific research” combines half-truths, misleading statements, paid commercials and weak factual evidence. A Wittgensteinian philosopher would, at least according to Gellner, have no problem with this. It’s all but a language game and why should one bother if the “Queen’s shilling” (Neave 2004) or European Commission’s funding has given it a particular twist – at least as long as one is able to find one’s way to the bank. It is up to fellow academics to make sure that entrepreneurially minded policy researchers will get away with less in the future. Although one cannot be too optimistic here – academic communities are increasingly fragmented, and the “Queen’s shilling” plays a stronger role defining the truth than it has at any time recently.

Be it as it may with Ludwig Wittgenstein and his role paving the way to the “everything goes” attitude of high postmodernism. It is not the purpose of the current essay to establish a connection between the lack of basic academic integrity among those commissioned to report on the successes of the European higher education project and a particular philosopher. It would be more interesting and more important to locate the current policy intentions in European higher education in a broader cultural and political context. Here Gellner would have quite a bit to say, and both his hero, Malinowski, and villain, Wittgenstein, will have their lasting relevance.

Gellner’s problem

Although Gellner did not say much about European integration and nothing at all about the role of higher education within it, both are closely connected to the central intellectual concern of many of his

writings – the division of Europe into small aggressively nationalistic states where romantic celebrations of the local village greens as an intellectual pursuit has denied a home and part to liberal cosmopolitan intellectuals. Viewed from that perspective the task of the European higher education project is obvious: to transcend the village green as well become attractive, intellectually and otherwise, to cosmopolitan intellectuals on a global scale. To this very day, however, there are more students and academics leaving Europe than coming here. It is highly likely that this is not merely a technical or even an economic issue. The Ruritanian attitude towards cosmopolitans is perhaps more widely spread than being limited to a country of Gellner’s imagination:

And what they [Ruritanians – V.T.] hate above all else are just those damned cosmopolitans, who lack roots of their own and wish to impose their rootlessness on others, and try make it a universal virtue of some grey general humanity. These rootless people are, not surprisingly, engaged in activities such as trade and thought, which lead them to these bloodless values. (Gellner 1998, 19)

As an outcome of World War I, as Gellner suggests, *Gemeinschaft* (community) replaced the *Gesellschaft* (society), carrying “the vision of the closed community, final and sovereign” (Gellner 1998, 24). Among those closed communities there are some great and powerful, such as Ruritania, but also some quite unfortunate ones, for example Vodkobuzia, that emerged from the fall of the Kakanian Empire in Central Europe.

As the great Empire of Kakania fell, the cosmopolitan Café Central in Vienna could no longer stand against the pressures of the *village green*. Nationalisms were on the rise, desiring to celebrate their roots. Roots, as Gellner confirmed, suddenly became everything: “Those endowed with roots are healthy and vigorous, those devoid of them are pathological and indeed pathogenic.” (Gellner 1998, 37)

This caused great distress to those who were not able to demonstrate their ancestors having had a part in the village dances. When a school teacher took on the role of a nation builder, no place was left for the liberal cosmopolitan seen as a pariah:

The pariah liberals were gifted and clever, they were exceedingly good at thinking and writing, and as on balance they were debarred from easy access to political positions, they had time to write, and they produced the great masterpieces of twentieth century liberalism. (Gellner 1998, 34)

After the fall of Kakania, liberal intellectuals lost their homes in Europe. As the national style of *Gemütlichkeit*, *Schlamperei* und *Schweinerei*, as Gellner colourfully describes the order of the day (Gellner 1998, 33) came to dominate over homeless cosmopolitans longing for universal values and an open society, many among the greatest European creative minds lost their previously cosmopolitan homes. Among them was also Ludwig Wittgenstein. However, it is also important to notice that Ernest Gellner represented the very same group. In a manner similar to Gellner's own method of establishing connections between his heroes' and villains' backgrounds and ideas, Hahn (1996, 52) suggests that Gellner's own writings tell us more about himself than those he wrote about. This we should keep in mind when proceeding.

As many other intellectuals of Jewish origin, Gellner found himself in the unenviable position of a homeless liberal intellectual. His lifelong interest in Wittgenstein and Malinowski can be traced back to his own situation and the same need to find a new home. While being a cosmopolitan, his return to Prague in the 1990s – more than anything else – demonstrates the true longings of his heart and, quite surprisingly, confirms his own “ethnocentric idealism” (Hahn 1996, 45). The trust of the Bologna process, as a solution to Gellner's problem of homelessness of liberal intellectuals in Europe, seems to be that the nation states and their mobilization of universities towards meeting the goals of the nations can be tran-

scended by means of creating a few common higher education structures. Such a view denies university a cultural role in the past as well as in the future. If nation states can be transcended at all, they will be transcended by means of culture, and universities are likely to play a central role here, a role that reaches well beyond the structural features of the university system.

Wittgenstein's failures

For Gellner, Wittgenstein – “a man without qualities, a formally converted Viennese Jew” (Gellner 1998, 45) – epitomizes almost everything that can go wrong in philosophy as well as in the life of a philosopher. Loneliness is the source of Wittgenstein's tragedy in life and in philosophy. Wittgenstein was looking for a philosophy, which allowed him to find comfort in the world that had denied him a home and cultural identity. Wearing *lederhosen*, as Gellner wisely noticed, does not turn a Jew into a Tyrolean. Wittgenstein needed a philosophy that would have given sense to his position in the world. He tried twice and failed – miserably and with fatal consequences for continental philosophy – as Gellner thinks, also twice. The first attempt to develop a philosophy for a lonely cosmopolitan in an alien world was made in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* – an essay “in masochistic pessimism”, concluding that:

The world he constructed was a sad world devoid of hope or meaning. Nothing that could be said was worth saying, and everything that was worth saying was unsayable within it. (Gellner 1998, 80)

In *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein tried to rise above the reality by attempting, with the help of logic and mathematics, to invent a *Godspeak* (Gellner 1959, 18) – a universal philosophical meta-language detached from all inconvenient realities. Not surprisingly, Gellner

was not happy with the result, suggesting wryly that the outcome of Wittgenstein's unfortunate attempt in philosophy was a poem that could be "sung to the tune of Good King Wenceslas" (Gellner 1959, 10). In his old age Wittgenstein made a radical turn, by no longer attempting to escape the reality, but trying to make himself at home in quite an unfriendly world where, after the fall of the Kakanian Empire, he had no inheritance. A homeless liberal intellectual was to find his home in ordinary language, instead of escaping the reality to the world of Godspoke of mathematical logic. Gellner was never shy offering colourful metaphors describing Wittgenstein's philosophy. The following summarises the linguistic philosophy of late Wittgenstein according to Gellner:

The linguistic philosophy, which cares only about language, and not about the world, is like the boy who preferred the clock without the pendulum because, although it no longer told the time, it went more easily than before and at a more exhilarating pace. (Gellner 1959, xiv)

The problem was that the reality, unfriendly and messy, offered no interest to a linguistic philosopher seeing his role as a guardian of conceptual table manners (Gellner 1959, 18).

Limiting the philosopher's role to that of a guardian over the everyday use of everyday language, in Gellner's view Wittgenstein was able to remove the need to deal with hostile cultures, as the only reality left was ordinary speech (Gellner 1959, 18). This trick, however, allowed Wittgenstein solving his own problem – claiming a part in the world that had rejected him, by virtue of speaking the language. Roots, such as tracking one's culture and identity back to the village green, were no longer important. Sharing the language was well sufficient. Gellner once again summarizes Wittgenstein's problem and the solution he found in his old age:

He did not think in socio-historical terms, and was unlikely to say to himself – I wish to escape the alienation of rootless cosmopolitan intellectuals in a

world where the dominant values are nationalist and populist, and my new theory of language both damns the universalist/individualist theory of language, and actually *proves* that anyone who speaks at all, is automatically a member of a community: ‘Hurrah! At last we’ve made it to the world of the ethnics and the village green, even if we don’t know which one’. (Gellner 1998, 86-87)

No doubt Gellner did not see the lack of a socio-historical context as a strength of Wittgenstein’s philosophies. It remains, however, quite unclear in Gellner’s own works, too, as to how exactly one is expected to reach the culture-transcending truth when both of Wittgenstein’s attempts have been rejected.

Seeing philosophy and perhaps other intellectual pursuits as mere language games had a devastating, if not corrupting effect on twentieth century scholarship. After asking for a connection between reality and text became a deadly sin, it did no longer matter whether a statement was true or not. This question no longer made sense. In that sense Wittgenstein’s home did come at a high price indeed. When the search for the truth was replaced with language games, misleading statements or lack of evidence did no longer matter. From now on, every statement one was able to utter carried the same truth content. Surprising or not, the so-called research on the Bologna process seems to be confirming the same. It is, however, ironic that the language game is living its life as a parasite on the old notions of science and truth. As soon as high postmodernism became truly able to relativize everything, the entire establishment would collapse.

Researchers of the Bologna process are able to mobilize funding for their heavily biased studies supported by fragmentary and weak data only because somebody somewhere believes that this can be presented as scientifically proven true statements. It is highly unlikely that the European Commission would finance such studies knowing what the researchers involved do know – that these are mere language games which have nothing to do with any

realities. In the context of that particular discourse the word *reality* no longer carries any meaning. In his early days Wittgenstein tried to transcend cultural divisions by reaching out to higher levels of abstractions until left with nothing more to say. Contradicting his own teaching however, silence did not, after all, appear as a particularly attractive alternative. Later, reducing the threshold to the lowest possible level he invented a home for himself in ordinary language, only to be left once again in solitude. Apparently, instead of engaging positively with culture, Wittgenstein's strategy in Gellner's interpretation looks like attempts to escape culture, first up- and later downwards. Parallels for the same strategies could be found for some approaches in European higher education policy, where instead of focusing on universities as central cultural institutions the very existence of culture is being denied by means of re-inventing universities as vocational training schools or – in a few cases – sites of contemplation so abstract that there is, indeed, nothing left to say.

Malinowski's solution

Malinowski by virtue of his background, as Gellner thought, was able to find an acceptable compromise between the political and the cultural. Reading Gellner, one is left with the impression that the division of the Habsburg Empire into nation states as a result of World War I constituted the core of his intellectual pursuits. Rising nationalisms across Europe denied their home to one of the most intellectually productive communities in Europe – the cosmopolitan liberal intellectuals. To Malinowski, who wrote his "Freedom and Civilization" during World War II, the problem appeared, however, somewhat differently. It was not the nation-state and nationalism that were the main problems, but a war between the nation states that by necessity denied humans their freedom. Mobili-

zation for a war, just or not, limited the freedom needed for the progress of humanity. As long there was even a possibility for a war and preparation for this, mankind could not prosper:

The democracies will have the choice, either to perish by the sword of their enemies, or to perish in preparing their own weapons of defense. In building up their preparedness they will have to sign their own death warrant as democracies, as free people, as decent people. (Malinowski 1947, 6)

At the time of his writing, freedom had developed more than one enemy:

Freedom is the most dynamic, essential, and general factor in the problems today. Democracy is freedom in action. Freedom of conscience is the essence of religion, and religion is the core of civilization. Cast off Christianity, and religion enters as the Nordic myth of Aryan superiority, the ritual of Hitler worship, and the Nazi ethic of domination. Proscribe God through the anti-God campaign in Russia, and you will worship the spirit of Marx and his gospel at the shrine of Lenin's embalmed body. (Malinowski 1947, 22)

Freedom for Malinowski serves as a source of culture, it provides everything that makes humans human:

It might as well be said that culture is a gift of freedom, for from the very beginnings of humanity freedom is a prerequisite of the exercise, the maintenance and the advancement of cultural achievements. (Malinowski 1947, 29)

Gellner summarizes Malinowski's view on the importance of culture as follows:

Men live their lives through a culture and can hardly find fulfilment in any other way. (Gellner 1998, 137)

Our existence as humans depends directly on our freedom. Following Malinowski, preparing for a war and waging it limit our free-

dom and constitute the greatest danger to our species as humans. Something therefore was to be done to avoid further wars once the one against the Nazi Germany was over. Malinowski's solution was therefore quite a radical one. His suggestion was to abolish the nation state as it had been known so far and establish an entirely new global political order, a solution similar to the one recently proposed by the former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations Malloch-Brown (2010). Malinowski suggested establishing the United States of the World – “the federated and united nations of the world” (Malinowski 1947, 224). What Gellner seems to have found particularly sympathetic about Malinowski's solution was his willingness to separate culture from politics:

The fullest cultural autonomy must be granted to all nationalities, races and minorities. Political sovereignty must never be associated with nationhood, since this produces the dangerous explosive of nationalism. Indeed, political power, insofar as it is centralized, must be vested in a hierarchy of federal units. Starting from local autonomy, it must proceed through administrative provinces, states and regional federations to a world-wide superstate. (Malinowski, 1947, 274)

Gellner fully endorses, perhaps even strengthens, Malinowski's solution:

Limit the political power of nations, but permit, indeed enhance and encourage, the perpetuation of all local cultures within which men found their fulfilment and their freedom. (Gellner 1998, 142)

He expresses the same even in stronger terms just a few pages later endorsing Malinowski's solution:

Colonise simply everybody – i.e. deprive their political units of sovereignty – whilst allowing them absolute cultural freedom of expression, thereby incidentally depriving boundaries of some of their importance and symbolic potency. (Gellner 1998, 144)

Suggesting separating political sovereignty from the nationhood appears a radical move. However, although Malinowski's problem was somewhat different from that of Gellner, the latter found Malinowski's solution taking also care of his own concerns. Within a globally organized federal political order there would perhaps once again be a place for the cosmopolitan intellectuals, even if they did not have any particular village green to celebrate, to die or kill for. Perhaps, with the time passing a temporary separation of culture from politics would allow new, global cultures to emerge: "Cultures are not terminal. The possibility of transcendence of cultural limits is a fact; it is the single most important fact about human life." (Gellner 1998, 187)

Perhaps once we were able to take care of the political, cultures would slowly follow, even to the extent of giving up the requirement to sacrifice neighbours to our local gods or wage a global war for particular cultural reasons. Sacrifice, as Feyerabend (1999) suggests, is the reason for having wars, the shortage of resources isn't. But you cannot sacrifice your own people, so you go headhunting to your neighbours' place.

Gellner's enthusiasm regarding Malinowski's solution to the problem of rising aggressive nationalisms in Europe and particularly the hatred towards liberal cosmopolitan intellectuals that is anti-semitism remains a mystery. For forty years Gellner criticized Wittgenstein who had tried to find a way forward for a philosopher in a very difficult world and praised Malinowski, who in the "Freedom and Civilization" had not come up with any particularly novel solution. Malinowski did not come up with a novel solution exactly because he did not need one: "The Jagellonian University in Cracow was predominantly Polish and proud of it." (Gellner 1998, 125) Malinowski did not have any particular identity problems either: "[H]e knew what he was, a member of the Polish gentry, and this was a prestigious thing to be." (Gellner 1998, 125) For Malinowski, the Habsburg Empire worked perfectly well and served as

a model for the future global political order. At times the same seems to have inspired the architects of the European Union and those of some other federal state structures, too. As Tony Judt suggests:

The Soviet Union once attracted many western intellectuals as a promising combination of philosophical ambition and administrative power, and 'Europe' has some of the same seductive appeal. For its admirers, as for many politicians and businessmen in the advanced regions of western and central Europe, the 'Union' is the latest heir to enlightened despotism of the last great reforming era before the coming of national states. For what is 'Brussels,' after all, if not a renewed attempt to achieve that ideal of efficient, universal administration, shorn of particularisms and driven by rational calculation and the rule of law, which the great monarchs – Catherine, Frederick, Maria Theresa and Joseph II – strove to institute in their ramshackle lands? (Judt 1996, 115)

“Enlightened despotism” was what Malinowski was looking for as a solution against an even greater evil: war. Applying Gellner’s own method of tracking a philosophy back to the philosopher’s social situation and experience, one can easily see that Malinowski offers the situation of the Poles within the Habsburg Empire 1900 A.D. as a satisfying global solution. As a Polish nobleman, he idealizes Polish cultural autonomy in Kakania and suggests that the Habsburg model could be extended globally. Throughout his volume *Civilization and Freedom* Malinowski is repeatedly declaring that his conclusions constitute and are the outcome of a scientific analysis. Many, as for example Evans-Pitchard (quoted in Hahn 1996, 50), disagree:

It is a good example of the morass of verbiage and triviality into which the effort to give the appearance of being natural-scientific can lead. (as above)

To both, Gellner and Malinowski this is the only way forward towards a more civilized world. Perhaps we should use Gellner’s own method trying to understand what exactly makes Malinowski

excessively attractive to him, while one could easily imagine him applying his weaponry of sarcasm in full scale on Malinowski's Kakanian utopia. Gellner's failure or perhaps unwillingness to see Malinowski's obvious faults is surprising, particularly in comparison to his skilful de(con)struction of Wittgenstein. Hahn (1996, 49) for example suggests that Malinowski's presentation of the Trobrianders as calculating individuals "according to the best Austrian economic science" should have been clearly noticeable to Gellner. For some reason he chose not to notice it. One may think that was out of the eagerness of making his own home in the house of Malinowskian anthropology – a much desired dwelling place, where he was never properly accepted.

Be it as it may, with the complex relationship between Gellner, Wittgenstein and Malinowski as major, although homeless, twentieth century European thinkers, the question Gellner raised continues to be an important one – Europe is still divided politically and intellectually. In the midst of the celebrations of the "village green", intellectuals and scholars with cosmopolitan, if not global, aspirations, often tend to flee to the other side of the Atlantic. This, as recent European policy documents seem to suggest, is perceived as a factor contributing to Europe's loss in global competitiveness in more than one way.

Philosophy and higher education in Europe

In order to bring forth a better world we need to transcend our cultural differences. As Gellner empathically suggested, the possibility of the latter "is the single most important fact about human life" (Gellner 1998, 187). If there is indeed an institution to lead in the very process of transcending cultural differences, it is university. However, as Neave (2007) suggested, serving the cultural and political needs of their nation states has been one of the primary pur-

poses of European universities for more than three centuries. Decoupling universities and cultures of the nation states may prove to be a more difficult problem than even the European Commission may assume. But even more difficult would be imagining a new culture, which would not follow either of Wittgenstein's solutions to the problem.

In the world as it stands in our days, the university constitutes the central institution that should enable various parts of humanity to transcend their cultural limitations, bringing forth the modern social imaginary. This, however, is a tall order that finds university right in the center of many of today's conflicts and contradictions. We may or may not like the Gellner-Malinowski solution of a global federal polity imposing peace on all ethnic groups, as Malinowski suggested, and endowing them with massive cultural autonomy as far as the latter did not include culinary and sacrificial uses of the neighbors' internal organs. However, as the lessons we are learning from the European integration project suggest, connections between culture and politics are complex and not particularly conducive to such a solution. While university would need to play a central role in transcending cultures, it is related to both culture and politics. Separating higher learning from both politics and culture is therefore a complicated, if not an altogether impossible, task, but still the one we need to discuss, at least to allow the followers of Ludwig Wittgenstein coming up with more socially and culturally engaged philosophies.

Perhaps we are no closer today to the United States of the World than we were back in 1943. We have, however, the European Union – an emerging federal political structure that follows an earlier idea of the United States of Europe – an idea that had already emerged as a project of the cosmopolitan European elites in the wake of World War I, addressing the need to unite Europe in order to avoid future massacres. In such a manner Malinowski's thinking followed on a larger scale the thoughts of the leaders of

the Pan-European movement, such as for example Count Coudenhove-Kalergi (see Coudenhove-Kalergi 1943). What makes Malinowski's thinking particularly interesting in the context of the current European higher education project is his radical suggestion to trade political sovereignty for peace by way of separating culture from politics. Peace should be given a priority over political liberties, and as long as the threat of war has not been removed, our freedom remains limited. Obviously, in any such world, cultures can flourish and economies prosper, but whether culture and prosperity will definitely moderate the thirst for a full political self-determination as a goal on its own is according to this author a matter by no means resolved yet.

To many of the European intellectuals the problem was a deeply personal one, as in a conflict between political claims of rising national cultures they emerged as potential enemies to everybody. Lacking a better solution one may wonder whether the European higher education project and – particularly its recent incarnation – the Bologna process, would take us towards the kind of free world Malinowski and Gellner contemplated. Or would it indeed be the case that Wittgensteinian language games in their utter and complete irrelevance to any social and cultural realities offer the only alternative to culture and scholarship in the service of the nation state's war machine? The latter would lead to de-culturing universities, which, as some may argue, is happening anyway – indeed as a result of the erosion of the cultural content of higher mass education as well as forcing universities to work towards narrowly economic goals (see e.g. Tomusk 2011a).

Perhaps there once was a time when politics did not oppose culture or the state the truth. The Humboldtian university for example did not experience this problem, as the state equalled truth. The state, as Gellner summarizes Hegel's position, emerged as a result of a pre-ordained rational plan and a nation without a state was not a nation:

Hegel had taught that nations truly enter history only by acquiring their own state and that stateless nations were not fully part of history; moreover, that what happened in history was part of a pre-ordained and rational plan, so that what happened was right. The real, in the celebrated phrase, was the rational. (Gellner 1998, 124)

For the Humboldtian university, therefore, the politics of Ruritania manifest the truth, and critical social science is not therefore a meaningful form of scholarly engagement. In our own days we tend to see things in a somewhat different light. But still: Universities are expected to contribute towards the reproduction of particular political regimes.

A question of a particular importance is as to whether one should expect the European Union to be such a Hegelian pre-ordained state, to live out the spirit of the European nation under construction? Certainly there are voices to be heard suggesting that indeed in some realm of ideas such a nation is waiting for its incarnation with the assistance of the institutions of the European Union. Others would perhaps rather challenge Hegel in Malinowski's manner by suggesting creating a Federal European state structure by means of denying European nations their own states and higher truths, allowing, however, large scale cultural autonomy? If the latter was the case – how would the cultural autonomy relate to universities that would need to serve the new political project?

It is quite obvious that the European Union is a political project aiming at creating a political structure in Europe that would make a war between European nations impossible after the horrors of World Wars I and II. In that sense the big European problem is clearly a Malinowskian one. It has, however, also been quite clear from the outset that the European public is not ready to approve any grand political vision for Europe. Europe was, therefore, to be created as one may say - through the back door. Instead of pushing frontally ahead with a grand plan for a federal Europe at once, as Altiero Spinelli and other European federalists suggested (Burgess

2004), knowing that the European public would not support such an idea, Jean Monnet's plan to lead Europe step by step towards a federal order by "bringing together men and practical matters" (Monnet, 1978, 367) was adopted instead. Tensions emerging from building a federal structure in Europe without informing the public as to what exactly the plan is, has given well-justified reasons to complain about a democratic deficit in Europe. Pushing ahead with the plan has at times, as Lord Patten suggests, taken the form of "a play of grandmother's footsteps":

Take a political step forward, and, if the electorate does not notice, then take the ground gained as the starting point for the next advance. This discredits the EU, and gives voters the impression that it is an elitist conspiracy. (Patten 2010, 13)

The manner in which the European higher education project, the so-called Bologna process, has been launched, may well justify the use of expressions such as "an elitist conspiracy". Whether such techniques help overcoming divisions among European nations and allow creating the federal structure of Malinowski's vision, albeit on a European scale, is not yet obvious.

A follower of Malinowski's would perhaps suggest leaving European universities as institutions of culture, alone, and while encouraging a widest variety of cultural groups developing their own educational structures, focusing on building an overarching federal political structure on the continent. This plan would, however, turn out as flawed. The successful political structure of Malinowskian vision – free and democratic – cannot function without popular support, and, if one does intend more than just restoring the Habsburg Empire enjoying the sympathy of the professorate of the University of Cracow and the likes, willing to maintain that the foundations of the Empire are *scientifically* established, one needs an educational system that builds loyalty towards a particular political vision. This leads to a chicken-and-egg problem, which the

Bologna process should crack in order to succeed. For more than three hundred years European universities and nation states have been mutually legitimizing (cf. Neave 2007), reinforcing each other as social institutions. It is a recent idea, and not a particularly well-accepted one, that the gap between the nation and the truth is likely to be a substantial one. Breaking the virtuous or vicious circle, depending on one's point of view, requires a collapse of political regimes similar to that in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, and even then a far-reaching change in the educational system is by no means certain (Tomusk 2004). Despite universalistic claims universities, as the late 20th century East European experience may suggest, appear to be quite good at identifying new particularistic projects whose interest they enthusiastically paddle. Overcoming nationalisms in Europe is no easy matter. Sinking powerful social institutions requires significant coordinated efforts, which at times has even been beyond the reach of powers as radical and determined as the Russian Bolsheviks.

The history of bringing Europe together after World War II may well indicate that the possibility of transcending cultural limitations is not necessarily as strong a fact as Gellner desired it to be. If the European nations have been able to transcend their divisions after World War II to some extent, it was the cold fear of the *barbarians at the gates* that helped consolidating the western part of the continent. The very fact that even the Lisbon Treaty does not provide for community competence in higher education demonstrates the difficulties of transcending cultural limitations, but perhaps also indicates the fear that allowing community competence in higher education would enable the political deepening of the Union in a manner beyond the control of the states. Many of the states belonging to the European Union cherish their universities as a source of loyalty and cultural identity far too much to allow Brussels openly to meddle with them. At the same time the stress put on the European dimension, including developing a common Euro-

pean identity through student exchanges, language teaching, teaching Europe, etc., (cf. COM 1991, 41) suggests that the integration of Europe without transcending cultural limitations would be very difficult indeed. However, as the European project and its higher education seem to be suggesting, in the European context we are not talking about transcending our cultural limits for a global cosmopolitanism but a continental identity. For the European political project to succeed European culture and loyalty to the European idea have to be strengthened. One may think of this in terms of replacing one kind of nationalism by another, perhaps somewhat extended one. In that context the widely spread expectation at the European level to see universities as a part of the economic sphere takes on a rather different meaning.

It may well be more about a short-term strategy of severing connections between universities and old European nation states than replacing a particular political order by an economic order as critics of neo-liberalism would argue. It almost appears as if the further integration of Europe and transcending of local cultures would be impossible without some kind of elitist conspiracy. Perhaps that was the position of those in the European Commission who, back in 1998, thought that in the wake of the Attali report addressing the manifold problems in French higher education (Attali 1998) an entry had been created for the EU to play grandmother's footsteps, making a stronger statement in European higher education and bringing forth a European system of higher education more supportive of EU integration needs, or, if not that, at least less sensitive to particular national concerns. Such a strategy is problematic not only on moral grounds. The game also required inventing a few legal tricks, which might eventually have doomed the entire edifice.

The legality of the Bologna process

The Bologna process started as a minor trick the French Ministry of Education played on French academics in order to overcome their resistance to change. Instead of confronting French higher education with the findings of the Attali report and most likely be rejected in a similarly direct manner, the French Ministry of Education decided to make a smarter move by means of a detour. Instead of addressing the universities, they organized a forum of four European Ministers responsible for higher education – from Italy, Germany, the UK and France – and signed a communiqué calling for the establishment of a European system of higher education. As Maassen and Musselin (2009) argued, the French minister of education needed an external force to blame for demanding unpopular reforms. Once the idea of creating a European system of higher education was expressed in the Sorbonne Declaration, the door was open to push the European higher education project well beyond the limits which had been thought possible since the 1970s. Suddenly French administration was in need for a pact with the devil in order to solve some of its internal problems.

The Adoption of the Sorbonne Declaration by four European ministers in charge of higher education was an unexpected gift to European federalists. Since the 1970s the European Community and later the European Union had been seeking a mandate in higher education and been denied this by the governments of its member states. Up to this very day the EU's legal mandate in higher education is based on a small number of rulings by the European Court of Justice, dating back to the 1980s. In cases such as 293/83 *Françoise Gravier vs the City of Liège* and 24/86 *Blaizot vs the University of Liège* (Tomusk 2011b) French students complained about having been charged a fee while studying in higher education institutions in Belgium. The European Court of Justice ruled in favour of the students arguing that the respective fields of study – cartoon

art in the first case and veterinary medicine in the second, constituted vocational training, and therefore fell under Art. 128 of the EEC Treaty of Rome laying down of general principles of a common vocational training policy. While the ECJ rulings created some space for joint European action in higher education, the fact that this was controlled by the vocational definition of higher education significantly limited the scope of activities possible and left any new initiative open to member states' challenges.

Now, all of a sudden, four countries had taken the initiative in a very different direction and asked the European Commission to be a part of it. Legally speaking this was not, however, an EU initiative, but an international one, whereby 29 countries came together signing an international soft-law agreement for joint actions in higher education. Those who would think that the choice of the 29 countries was a random one were perhaps mistaken, as these were exclusively EU members and candidate countries. In a way, the Bologna Declaration allowed launching an EU higher education policy through a backdoor – via an international agreement of 29 sovereign countries outside the EU decision-making instruments.

Some commentators have seen it as a conspiracy against the European Union itself (cf. Garben 2008). The argument here is that by taking an initiative outside of the EU structure, EU member states participating in the Bologna process effectively undermined the Union. Such a view, however, is based on a particular interpretation of higher education – as an instrument in building a common market. Seeing higher education in its function of building a common market (a view which among others contradicts the Magna Charta of the European University), Garben argues that EU countries actually had not only an option but a responsibility to adopt a “Bologna Directive” in the European Council, instead of avoiding EU structures and signing an agreement behind – so to speak – the EU's back.

The view of this author is different. While the impossibility of the EU member states delegating higher education to the community competence has been historically proven, it was actually the European Commission that conspired against the member states, supporting the Bologna process politically as well as financially. It is hardly conceivable that a hypothetical “Bologna Directive” would have received the required unanimous support from the member states in the European Council of Ministers.

The success of the Bologna process as an emerging EU higher education policy was, however, short-lived. The international soft-law format that made it possible also opened it to particular risks. The Bologna process, presenting itself to the outside world as an elite project representing the European standards in higher education tempted a number of countries to take a free ride towards the world-class, not through diligent academic work but by means of political lobbying and negotiations. In such a manner Mr. Putin of Russia and M. Chirac of France in the summer of 2003 reached an agreement regarding the desirability of Russia joining the Bologna process, much to the dismay of the Bologna Follow-Up Group who just a few months earlier had reached a very opposite conclusion. The latter had to back off, and in September 2003 the Russian Minister of Education signed the Bologna Declaration. In 2010 Kazakhstan was the 47th country joining the Process, rendering it as an EU higher education policy instrument all but meaningless. The crown of the process is the fact that Kazakhstan’s autocratic political regime censors western academic literature (Tomusk 2011b).

Conclusion: a long march towards a liberal utopia

On a final account the ideas of the founding fathers of the United States of Europe and liberal intellectuals originate from the same source of the liberal-humanitarian utopia described by Karl Mann-

heim. Malinowski confirms Mannheim's statement that "with the liberal-humanitarian idea the utopian element receives a definite location in the historical evolution – it is a culminating point of historical evolution" (Mannheim 1936, 224). As an interesting twist, however, Malinowski's "scientific method" allowed him to interpret a version of the past known to him as a culmination of historical evolution in the future. Culture, as Mannheim argued and both Gellner and Malinowski confirmed, constitutes the very core of a positive program for the future:

The fundamental attitude of the liberal is characterized by a positive acceptance of culture and the giving of an ethical tone to human affairs. He is most in his element in the role of critic rather than that of creative destroyer. He has not broken his contact with the present here and now. About every event there is an atmosphere of inspiring ideas and spiritual goals to be achieved (Mannheim 1936, 220).

What needs to be worked out, however, is the required discontinuity between contemporary culture and the one that would support a utopian vision of future. The problem with a utopia, as Aurel Kolnai has pointed out

[...] is not that the utopian bliss cannot be satisfactorily put into practice: the trouble is that it cannot be thought out consistently in the theorist's study (Kolnai 1960 and 1999, 130).

Russian Bolsheviks thought that killing the entire population who remembered the past would make possible radical discontinuity, while European ideologues seem to be convinced that by tricking the nations into a new reality for some significant period would facilitate cultural revolution. Both are ignoring the fact that a cultural change of the Gellnerian vision should be continuous and as such require significant time. Revolutionaries do not look as if they had patience for the latter, if they did, perhaps one should not call them revolutionaries after all.

Malinowski interpreted his own ideological position as a result of an objective scientific analysis, while Gellner demonstrated the deepest dislike towards the one who, with great passion, had tried reaching Gellner's own goal – culture transcending truth – Ludwig Wittgenstein. There is no intellectual rigor or even much of internal consistency in any of these approaches but the past experience of a particular individual into which hopes for a better future have been projected. Gellner by his own accord believes in progress, but fails to identify its source.

As soon as one is expected to work any of this out for the real world, the situation turns out quite imperfect. As a British diplomat Robert Cooper noted, states have three instruments of influence available to them – persuasion, bribery and coercion (Cooper 2003, 116). Persuasion – words – can make an impact being combined with one of the other two – money or military power.

Cooper also realizes the cultural dimensions of any solution to our problems:

[...] to find permanent solutions we may need to think in terms of redefining identity. Only if a wider identity can be developed, will there be a chance of constructing the kind of international community that may enable us to live with each other without a war. (Cooper 2003, 87)

In a world where not everybody is a liberal-humanitarian, there are perhaps radically different ideas in many places for desirable future world orders other than our own. The extent to which bribery and coercion appear as useful instruments building a global identity remains questionable. Not everybody in every corner of the world sees the Habsburg Empire as the highest peak of historical evolution. It is perhaps easier with Europe. One could potentially construct an external adversary, as Samuel Huntington so infamously did, against which a new identity could be built. But at this stage “national myths” (Cooper 2003, 132) seem to be too strong to allow a European identity to become dominant. The issue becomes

even more interesting once one has noticed that Europe's post-World-War-II success has to a very significant degree relied on NATO, which is the presence of the US armed forces in the western part of the continent. Breaking nations as powerful social institutions requires both resources and time. Establishing new ones, such as a European, even more so. One could perhaps think about it in terms of a simple example: Replacing French and British permanent seats in the UN Security Council appears a relatively minor issue. Why, then, are these countries not volunteering to do so in order to give what would likely to be a major boost to a common European foreign policy and European identity?

Turning the entire issue into an economic one may appear a simple enough solution to reach the goal, so that all national European countries adopt the identity of an Austrian economist – an attitude Malinowski attributed to Trobrianders (Hann 1996, 49). They should acknowledge that economic prosperity trumps national sovereignty. Twelve years after launching the Bologna process there is still no common higher education policy on the horizon in Europe. The recent economic crisis has made countries more sensitive about their own interests, so that the United Kingdom for example is even less inclined than before towards a common higher education policy and would happily see EU citizens being charged not the fee UK students currently have to pay, but rather a full overseas' student fee.

Higher education is likely to remain in the competence of nation states for the foreseeable future, meaning that there is likely to be no coordinated effort to be launched to transcend local cultures in Europe by means of higher education. Clearly, there is no solution following Gellner's hopes. Perhaps Malinowski's solution is still conceivable. That would require severing the connection between culture and politics, and neutralizing universities by means of pushing them from the political to the economic realm. This, perhaps, would be possible. Whether killing culture would be an

adequate price to pay for political integration on the continent is a question that should be discussed without a possible further reference to family entertainment.

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Balance of Ten Years of Reform: Changes in the Croatian Higher Education System

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Introduction

More than a decade has passed since Croatia signed the Bologna Declaration in Prague in 2001 and ratified it in 2002. During this period of time, the Croatian higher education system has gone through numerous changes as a consequence of the Bologna process which gained further importance because of the EU accession process. The Bologna process – though started as a non-EU initiative – has become a core element of EU activities in the field of higher education, which is supported by several financial programmes. The Croatian government and legislature took several steps in order to harmonize the legal framework with the requirements of the Bologna process but the main challenges arose during its implementation at institutional level. The above mentioned support programmes and the international expertise provided by the European Union and the international community played an important role in the involvement of higher education institutions and the development of the organizational background. As a result of these circumstances, the implementation process started and more and more stakeholders got involved. As it will be described in this paper, several programmes – mainly financed by the European Union – supported this process, namely the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System, Diploma Supplement, the establishment evaluation and recognition procedures at institutional and national levels, quality assurance system, etc.

However, the full implementation of the Bologna process is still far from its conclusion. The success of the Bologna process

mainly depends on how it will be able to achieve those objectives set by itself (e.g. focus on employability, mobility of students and professors). These aspects have become increasingly important as Croatia managed to finish the accession talks and is expected to become a member of the European Union in July 2013 and thus getting into closer relation with other EU member states' systems.

First steps towards the new structure

After the ratification of the Bologna Declaration, the Croatian government's first task was to establish an appropriate legal and institutional framework for the Bologna reforms. It was also underpinned by the ratification of another international agreement, the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (hereafter Lisbon Convention). The new Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education – adopted in 2003 and amended in 2004 – was already compatible with the Bologna principles (Polšek 2004, 285; Orosz 2008, 70), which had to address several issues since the pre-Bologna system in Croatia differed from the Bologna structures in various aspects. Some of these differences were rooted in the former Yugoslav higher education system, as for example the fragmented university structure in which the faculties and institutes enjoyed a wide range of autonomy – including funding –, which made strategic planning and the development of multidisciplinary curricula very difficult (Haug, Tauch 2001, 59-60; Clark 2003).

Reforms of the mid-1990s did not touch this organizational arrangement. One of the main results of those reforms was the shift to a dual system by establishing a professional higher education sector alongside the universities (in Croatian: *sveučilište*). Within the new sector two types of institutions exist: polytechnics (*veleučilište*) and the schools of professional higher education (*viso-*

kaškola). Though the intention was to establish a more practice-oriented sector separate from the academic one, which is able to satisfy local and regional needs, the result was rather a mixed institutional profile since many new institutions started to work within the frame of universities or the same instructors teaching in universities taught in the new ones which also led to a decrease in quality (Polšek 2004, 288-89). The study programmes offered by these institutions were arranged in three cycles. Professional studies usually lasted for two years. University first-cycle studies were organized as long-cycle studies which lasted at least four years (up to six years for medical studies) and provided students with broad knowledge of the disciplines and opportunities for further education at the postgraduate level. Postgraduate education was organized into two cycles: the master programmes, lasting at least two years, and doctoral programmes, lasting an average of three to six years (Dujčić, Lučin 2007, 24).

The above mentioned new act was the first attempt to foster integrated university structures by prescribing integrated university status from late 2007 and by introducing lump-sum financing at university level from January 2006, which allowed the universities to make their financial decisions according to their own institutional strategies. It also prescribed united legal entity for the newly established universities (Croatia Bologna National Report 2005, 1). Concerning the dual system, in order to ensure separation between professional and university sectors the Act required that only professional higher education institutions can organize professional study programmes from the academic year of 2010/11. In addition the Act introduced the Bologna three-cycle study structures parallel to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS). The deadline provided for the implementation of this regulation at institutional level was the academic year of 2005/06. Regarding university studies, the Bologna three cycles have been organized as follows:

Undergraduate studies last three to four years and require the accomplishment of 180 to 240 ECTS credits. By the end of undergraduate studies, the bachelor's degree (baccalaureus or baccalaurea) is awarded, specifying profession. The graduates can apply for both university and professional master's graduate studies or enter the labour market.

The graduate master's study is a one-to-two-year programme requiring 60 to 120 ECTS credits. By the end of graduate master's study, the Master of Science (M.Sc.) or Master of Arts (M.A.) is awarded. Then students can qualify to take part in postgraduate programmes.

Postgraduate university studies last for three years and are not necessarily linked to the European Credit Transfer System system. Upon completion, the degree Doctor of Science (Dr. Sc.) or Doctor of Arts (Dr. Art.) is awarded. Additionally, universities may organize postgraduate specialist studies lasting one to two years, after which a specialist's degree for a particular field is awarded.

On the contrary, professional studies are divided into two cycles by the act: A *professional undergraduate study programme* can last two to three years; by its completion from 120 to 180 ECTS credits must be earned. Exceptionally, with the approval of the National Council for Higher Education, professional studies may last four years in cases when it is in compliance with internationally recognized standards; during such studies up to 240 ECTS credits must be accomplished. In case of a professional study with less than 180 ECTS credits, the corresponding professional title of these qualifications is determined by a special law, while programmes with 180 and more credits award a bachelor's degree. With this qualification one can apply for university graduate master's studies or for specialist professional graduate studies. *Specialist professional graduate studies* last one to two years; by the completion of 60 or 120 ECTS credits students can acquire the title of a specialist in a particular profession (Dujčić, Lučin 2007, 24-25;

Orosz 2008, 74-75). The three main cycles of study were fully introduced in the academic year 2005/6 and since then it has not been possible to enrol in pre-Bologna type programmes. However, the main aim of the first cycle (i.e., entrance into the labour market) did not seem to be achieved. At the same time the use of the ECTS became obligatory at higher education institutions from the academic year 2005/6. (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 13) The aim of the European Credit Transfer System was twofold: on the one hand it was supposed to promote mobility between different study programmes – both at national and international level – and flexible learning paths and to enable easier recognition procedures. Nevertheless, the European Credit Transfer System could not fully comply with its task since in Croatia mobility between professional and university studies remained limited. (Dujčić, Lučin [eds.], 2007). Neither has been the European Credit Transfer System linked to students' workload properly since in many institutions there was resistance to change the organizational traditions of their teaching and marking system. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 29) As far as the Diploma Supplement was concerned, in the first phase its contents and the way it was provided to students were not regulated in detail. (Eurydice 2005, 112)

Beyond the legal framework, the act launched a development process within institutions that are an integral part of the higher education reform in Croatia. The act also reconsidered the function of the already existing advisory body, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), which is the most important independent and professional consultative body regarding higher education reforms and development. The National Council for Higher Education has thirteen members chosen by the parliament on the basis of the government's proposal among prominent individuals in higher education and research. Furthermore, the council has two members outside the field of higher education and science. The National Council for Higher Education:

- proposes and encourages taking measures for the development of higher education;
- proposes a network scheme of public higher education institutions;
- approves the conditions of the Rectors' Conference and the Council of Polytechnics and for obtaining academic-educational, artistic-educational and educational titles;
- proposes to the minister rules on standards and criteria for the establishment and evaluation of new higher education institutions and programmes of study;
- appoints reviewers and gives its opinion on the establishment of new higher education institutions and programs of study; and
- evaluates higher education institutions and programmes of study and proposes the issuance of licenses to the minister.

According to the act, the National Council for Higher Education together with the National Council for Science (NCS) can propose the allocation of financial resources (Croatia Bologna National Report 2005, 1-2; Orosz 2008, 71). The professional and administrative support of the National Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Science is the responsibility of the Agency for Science and Higher Education. It fulfils an expert task by assessing research and higher education activities and recognizing degrees and other qualifications. It evaluates higher educational institutions, their study programmes, research programmes, and quality control and development and it provides the National Information Centre with data about mobility. It reports about its own activities to the National Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Science, which base their decisions on these reports. It is also responsible for international activities and cooperation in the field of quality assurance (ENQA) and recognition of qualifications

(ENIC). The act also prescribed for the agency to involve external - both domestic and foreign - expertise while carrying out its tasks. The above mentioned first steps were very essential for the implementation of the Bologna process in Croatia. However, it has to be noted that the centrally directed reform could not be successful without the commitment and involvement of the higher education institutions, especially when taking into account the fragmented university structures. This was already pointed out by the European University Association (EUA 2005). In this environment the international support and exchange of best practices played an important role in raising the awareness of academics and institutions' staff and students. This was one of the objectives of the Tempus Project called "Moving Ahead with the Bologna process in Croatia" (2004-2007) which managed to involve all the universities in Croatia. Another way of how universities have been able to gain more input for their own reform approaches has been the participation in international evaluation procedures of the European University Association. The first institutional self-evaluations were completed in 2000, followed by external evaluations, with the involvement of international experts and organizations such as the European University Association. (Krbec 2006, 68.) In 2005 another institutional self-evaluation took place with the participation of all Croatian universities whose results were evaluated by the European University Association during its advisory visit in May 2005.¹ The report of the EUA emphasized the need for the constant improvement of quality in education and research and that quality should be interpreted more widely. (EUA 2005, 3.)

¹ The self-evaluation reports of the universities are available on the website of the Croatian Rectors' Conference: www.unizg.hr/rz/eua/pov.htm.

Moving ahead with reforms

The above mentioned first measures and actions provided the first momentum for the Bologna process in Croatia. However, true implementation is still far away because both, institutional level implementation and development of quality assurance (QA) and its administrative support, had to be achieved. In the next part of this study the recent state of reforms are to be introduced, but it is also to be noted that because of the lack of information on the implementation at institutional level, the description cannot be considered complete.

Regulations on qualifications

Since the end of 2006 the amended regulations have guaranteed that students studying in Bologna-type structures should receive their Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge in English and Croatian. Since most Bologna-type studies began in the academic year 2005/6, the first Diploma Supplements were issued in 2008. The students who started their studies within the framework of the newly structured training courses one year earlier were to receive this document in 2007 (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 12.). Since obligation only exists to issue the Diploma Supplement to the students of the three-cycle programmes, students from pre-Bologna programmes did not automatically get a diploma supplement (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 24).

In 2006 the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport set up a working group which prepared a proposal for the Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF) in November and December 2006, which consulted all relevant stakeholders at three national conferences. As a result, the parliament adopted the baseline for the Croatian Qualification Framework in July 2007, which determines the glossary of terms, outlines the aims and principles of the Croatian

Qualification Framework in accordance with the guidelines in the proposals and discussions for the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the European Qualifications Framework as well as the credit ranges and qualifications. The eight levels and the four sublevels introduced by the proposal cover all the three cycles and they are described by means of credits and qualifications gained after the completion of studies on a certain level. The national committee, responsible for the establishment and implementation of the Croatian Qualification Framework, started to work in September 2007. The committee consists of representatives of all relevant stakeholders such as academia, employers and trade unions. After the adoption of a five-year activity plan the committee established an operational team of education experts whose task it was to prepare a description of competences and define the general learning outcomes for each level of the Croatian Qualification Framework. Later, in December 2008, the National Committee adopted the generic descriptors for all CROQF levels, and started a national consultation process, which lasted until the end of January 2009. The National Committee also set up 26 Sector Working Groups being in charge of the design of qualification standards (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 16). The implementation of the Croatian Qualification Framework is supposed to be completed by 2012. Unfortunately, the economic crisis has a negative impact on this process since limited resources were rather focused on other aspects of the reforms. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 31.)

Quality Assurance

Probably one of the most important aspects of reform in Croatia is the development of the quality assurance system which has gone through several organisational changes since its establishment. This

aspect got attention quite late although the drop-out rates at universities were quite high. The National Foundation for Science, Higher Education, and Technological Development in Croatia launched a programme for the development of the quality assurance units at universities in 2005. As a result the Universities of Osijek, Zagreb, and Rijeka established these organizational units. Within the framework of a CARDS programme the National Council for Higher Education compiled a guidebook regarding the proposed internal institutional quality assurance system in order to support the other institutions as well (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 9). In July 2007 National Council for Higher Education adopted a three-year evaluation plan for higher education institutions that started in 2008 with pilot projects at three different higher education institutions, which also included the evaluation of some elements of a quality assurance system. The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) has organized several workshops and seminars that promoted the development of quality assurance units at higher education institutions and on the basis of experiences collected during the pilot projects shared further information on this issue. Organizing internal quality assurance belongs within the area of responsibility of the higher education institutions (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009) and until now it seems that these procedures are rather considered as “writing of a formal self-assessment report for external evaluation”. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 36.)

The new Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science was adopted in April 2009. It implemented the suggestions outlined by the CARDS project and aligned the Croatian quality assurance system with the ESG (Standard and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area). The new act also reaffirmed the central role of the Agency for Science and Higher Education which reports annually to the national councils in charge of science and higher education and determined some or-

ganizational structures for the Agency for Science and Higher Education in order to carry out its tasks. External evaluation is jointly done by the National Council for Higher Education and the Agency for Science and Higher Education. The National Council for Higher Education makes proposals for criteria and rules of accreditation, appoints experts who are to pursue evaluation, and accepts the outcome of these accreditations. Institutions and their programmes are examined at least every five years and their operational permits are extended or denied according to the outcome. If requested by the institutions, assessment can take place more often. The Quality Assurance Department of the Agency for Science and Higher Education provides help for the expert activity necessary for evaluation. Even foreign experts are usually involved in the evaluations, but the agency tries to join the international exchange of opinions in other ways as well. The Agency for Science and Higher Education has joined the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education and, after acquiring full membership of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE-Network), it is also a full-member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 11).

Higher education's relation to the labour market and the economy

Despite the full implementation of the first two cycles, the Bologna National Report in 2009 still pointed out the need for further development in curriculum reform in order to link them to learning outcomes (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 7) and labour market needs. In the case of the first two cycles there have been various opinions concerning the labour market value of university undergraduate studies. Many universities shared the view that only a

small portion of students would enter the labour market while most would continue their studies. Although most disciplines reconsidered their curricula in the majority of the universities surveyed, representatives of professions and employers still took part in the negotiations very rarely (Orosz 2008, 75). A number of international study papers have pointed out this defect but also the synthesis of the implemented evaluations of higher education institutions in 2008/9 found that curricula of professional study programmes do not follow the needs of the labour market (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009, 3). These views could be underlined by the fact as well that only small number of bachelor students could enter the labour market. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 34.)

However, this does not mean that there were no steps taken in order to enhance cooperation with labour market agents. The last Bologna Report (2009) mentioned several promising measures at national level contributing to development in this regard. As part of the TEMPUS SCM project “Furtherance of Bologna process in Croatia”, a survey was conducted in cooperation with the Croatian Chamber of Economy about the expectations of businesses towards graduates holding bachelor degrees. Based on this survey, a Bologna process handbook for employers was published at the end of 2007.

A national employability conference was held in July 2008 with over 300 participants representing all stakeholders relevant to employability of highly educated persons. The conference presented the Bologna process reforms, answered the more prominent questions identified in the Tempus project survey and presented the national-level policy changes to improve the employability of Bologna process graduates. In July 2008 a reformed national regulation was passed that aligned all civil service employment regulations with the Bologna process academic and professional qualifications. Also in July 2008 national guidelines were published for the issuance of the diploma supplement document. The guidelines

specifically built on the Bologna process the European Credit Transfer System discussions at the end of 2007 and emphasized the relevance of the description of learning outcomes for the increase in employability of graduates (Croatian Bologna National Report 2009, 15). The business sector also promoted the work of the National Committee for Croatian Qualification Framework and its Operational Team set up in April 2008. Last but not least, cooperation and stronger links between education and the labour market are included in all relevant strategic and framework documents, which underlines the increased attention towards this issue. However, as has been pointed out by an ETF study, the elaborate policy framework has not lead to systemic changes yet. (ETF 2010, 9.)

There are also attempts to build stronger connections between the research sector and the economy. Unfortunately, employers are not very much interested in researchers with PhD. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 34.) Until now the dominance of public universities and state-funded centres characterised the research sector which was pointed out by various reports and reviews (Bologna National Reports 2007, 2009 and OECD Thematic Review in 2007 prepared by the MSES; Orosz 2008, 81-82). The Croatian Government launched support programmes (TEST and RAZUM) in the second half of the decade in order to enhance private investment and involvement in research activities.

The Amendments to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (April 2007) had introduced two significant changes as well to the system of incentives for investments from enterprises in the higher education sector. Firstly, the definition of persons and legal entities who can apply for state funding of scientific projects was broadened. Secondly, a system of tax reductions was introduced in which scientific research qualifies for a reduction of tax obligations. Both of these incentives encourage the collaboration between higher education institutions, research institutes and private enterprises. This also facilitates the commercialization of sci-

entific research and the entry of private funding into higher education (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 2/3). Last but not least, the efforts have to be mentioned which introduced lifelong learning into the Croatian higher education system. They are strongly related to vocational and adult education initiatives in Croatia. The Agency for Mobility and the EU Programmes were established in 2007 with a mandate of implementing the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009). Nonetheless, as Lučin and Samaržija pointed out the concept of lifelong learning was not yet properly understood and integrated into the higher education system in Croatia but rather used for generating income. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 33)

In Croatia one of the aims was to enhance acceptance and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. This was managed by the Act on Adult Education of 2007, which formally introduced informal and non-formal learning into the Croatian educational system. Based on this Act, it is possible for higher education institutions to recognize informal or non-formal learning and allocate credits for such learning outcomes but still up to now it has not become a common at higher education institutions. University of Rijeka is the only university establishing regulations and processes for such purpose. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 33.) Last but not least, there are also attempts to foster recognition of prior learning by including it into the Croatian Qualification Framework (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009).

E-learning was supported by the TEMPUS project “Education Quality Improvement by E-learning Technology” between 2004 and 2009. The Universities of Dubrovnik, Rijeka and Zagreb prepared, discussed and adopted policy documents for the implementation and the use of e-learning. E-learning centers or e-learning support teams at each of these universities have been established and are operating (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 14.; website of the Tempus project: <http://eqibelt.srce.hr/>). Since then

the University of Zagreb has launched such a study programme. The development of this sector of higher education is important because the number of students involved in studies, that is, students studying while working, is increasing quickly in Croatia.

International dimensions of the reforms

One of the core elements of the Bologna process is the international mobility of students and academics. Croatia therefore adopted the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications in compliance with the Lisbon Convention in July 2004 and introduced a simplified procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications introduced in 2005 (Croatia Bologna Report 2007, 12-13). The ENIC/NARIC office was also established within MSES, which later became part of the Agency for Science and Higher Education as it became fully operational in December 2004. Between 2004 and 2006 2,739 requests were handed in and in most cases positive decisions were made. In cases of joint degrees a similarly flexible approach has been followed (ibid., 12-13). Nonetheless, the role of the ENIC office has changed significantly since its establishment.

After the amendment of the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications in 2006 the procedures of professional and academic recognition were separated. While the recognition of higher education qualifications and studies accomplished abroad remained the responsibility of higher education institutions, the decisions on requests for the purpose of employment in Croatia, called professional recognition, belong within the authority of the Agency for Science and Higher Education ENIC office. The Act required universities and other higher educational institutions to establish recognition offices by July 2007 at the latest (Act on Amendments to the Act on the Recognition of Foreign Educational

Qualifications).² Since then the universities have established these offices and developed the procedure applicable to the whole of each institution to recognize foreign qualifications and study periods. Concerning mobility, it can be said that inward and outward mobility of students and academics is not too intensive and quite balanced. (Orosz 2008, 78) The reason for this was the low interest in Croatia because of the lack of courses in general and of language courses for international students in particular as well as a missing marketing strategy. (Reichert, Tauch 2003, 37) It can be also noted that it is still not clearly recognized that mobility of researchers³ is important and necessary. (Lučin, Samaržija 2011, 35) Regarding outgoing mobility, the low level of interest was a result of financial and administrative difficulties (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 18-19).

Some changes can be expected now as Croatia has established its Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes and has become full participant of Lifelong Learning Programme and the Erasmus programme. Statistics show that currently mainly Croatian students use this opportunity to visit other European universities, while incoming mobility hasn't got a momentum (European Commission: Outgoing and incoming Erasmus student mobility in 2009/2010³.) In order to promote staff and student mobility the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes got 200,000 Euros in order to launch the Programme of Bilateral Mobility in Higher Education for the academic year 2008/09. The Bologna National Report 2009 (p. 37) also mentioned that in previous years MSES funded over 4,000 months of scholarships per year for exchange and that it awarded financial assistance to postgraduate and doctoral specializations abroad. It stated that 139 scholarships of up to 5,000 Euros each were awarded in 2008. Concerning the portability of grants, the report (*ibid.*, 38-39) also drew attention to the fact that state funds

² The English version of the act is available at www.azvo.hr/Default.aspx?sec=111.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/0910/students.pdf>, accessed 21/06/2011.

in the higher education budgeting system in Croatia were not provided to higher education institutions in the form of student grants, which could have been made portable. Nevertheless, the government provides some grants to those students studying abroad in the frame of bilateral agreements whose costs are not sufficiently covered by the partner. Portable grants are also available for third cycle students on a competitive basis.

Students' voices in the Croatian higher education reform

At the beginning of the implementation of the Bologna process in Croatia, aspects of students were not really on the agenda of the decision-makers. Nonetheless, later, as quality issues came to the front, the question of student-oriented education could not be avoided. This led to increased presence of students in university senates (the Act on Higher Education prescribes a level of 15%). Furthermore, they have been involved in part in the work of the Agency for Science and Higher Education at state level since January 2007 (Croatia Bologna National Report 2007, 5). Despite these facts, the influencing power of students has remained limited. In July 2007 the new Act on Student Councils and other Student Organizations was passed. The Act reformed the system of student representation in Croatia and allowed students a better overview of the functioning of their representatives. The new act also stipulates that all higher education institutions shall have a student ombudsman. The student ombudsman is appointed by the student representative body and has the authority to discuss student complaints with the management of the institution, to advise students on their statutory and legal rights and assist them in any disciplinary cases. Students are also involved in all phases of evaluation as full members of evaluation teams (Croatia Bologna National Report 2009).

During the last few years, Croatian students have expressed their views not only officially, but there have also been spectacular movements by means of which they tried to influence the implementation of the reforms in a certain direction. In May 2008 several thousands of students demonstrated against the ineffective implementation of the Bologna Reforms (e.g. how the three-year long first cycle had been introduced).

Conclusion

The recent overview of the Bologna process in Croatia underlined the continuous support for the reform at different levels. Alongside the ministry and other governmental agencies, higher education institutions have also got involved more actively in the reform process by participating in international projects which aimed at facilitating the implementation of the reforms. Croatia has now reached a stage where implementation shall pay particular attention to adequacy and quality issues in the reform. Initiatives and projects mentioned in this study showed that there has been a great need to develop the real content of reforms foreseen by legal documents. It will become necessary to reconsider the implementation at institutional level in order to abolish the diversified practices at institutional level which hinder the flexible learning pathways and making the best use of the Bologna process. Particular attention is to be paid to the first cycle studies and the development of their curricula, which can ensure that students have the necessary knowledge and skills to enter the labour market. The Croatian Government will not have an easy task since the economic and financial crisis has seriously impacted the labour market. Croatia shall also take into account that it will soon become a member of the European Union and, if it wants to take advantage of the EU programmes, it will need to make its higher education more attractive to foreign students from other EU member states.

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The Bologna Process in the Czech Republic*

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The country context

The Czech Republic is a relatively small country (an area of 78,886 km²) in Central Europe. Territorially, the Czech Republic is divided into 13 regions and the capital city, Prague. It has roughly 10.5 million inhabitants, out of which slightly less than 0.5 million are foreigners, one third from EU. Three-quarters of the population live in urban areas, 1.3 million in the capital city. The official language is Czech. The Czech Republic came into existence when the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia) split into two states on 1 January 1993. The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy with the President as the head of state. The Parliament has two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies (Poslanecká Sněmovna) with 200 members elected for a four year term under a system of proportional representation, and the Senate comprising of 81 Senators elected under a simple majority system for a six-year term.

University education has a long tradition in the country. First University was established by Charles IV, Czech King and Roman Emperor in 1348. This University educated students from the large Central and Eastern European area and was a centre of intellectual activities. Together with Technical Higher School, established in 19th century, Charles University created a pillar of educational culture and scientific development in former Czechoslovakia. Freedom of study and research was a focus of twice totalitarian repressions, nazi and communist ones. In 1989 university students were active agents of the “velvet revolution”. During 1990th academics

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contributed seriously to the conception of educational transformation and supported the process of integration with European Union. Major changes in the educational system including higher education were influenced by the overall process of political and social transformation together with processes of European integration. The Czech Republic actively participated in the Bologna process since its beginning. Bologna priorities and implementation of the principles have created a main concern of higher education policy in the national reforms.

Education system in the Czech Republic

Pre-primary education (for children 3-6 years old) is not compulsory but attendance is very high (95%) in the last pre-school year it has to be available to all children. The basic education combine primary and lower secondary levels of education (ISCED 1 + 2) in one organisational unit and proved compulsory education. It lasts nine years. There is a five-year first stage and a four-year second stage. Upon completion of the first stage, pupils who show interest and succeed in the admission procedure may transfer to a multi-year secondary school (gymnasium).

The secondary education schools provide secondary education (upper secondary – ISCED 3) and postsecondary education (ISCED 4) which enables pupils to change or broaden their original education pathway. Vocational secondary education provides pupils with qualifications of manual and technical skills and lasts from 1 to 3 years (ISCED 3C). The secondary education of 4 years duration (ISCED 3A) is of either general or vocational nature. The final certificate (maturita exam) enables in general all graduates to enter tertiary education. The state standardized maturita exam came into action just this year (2011). Tertiary education is composed of two segments. The first and relatively small one includes tertiary pro-

professional schools which offer professionally oriented courses (ISCED 5B). Duration of studies is mostly 3 years (3.5 years in health specialisations) and graduates are awarded by the degree “Diploma Specialist” (not comparable with Bachelor’s degree). Higher education is provided by higher education institutions, which compose the main part of tertiary education. The higher education institutions provide all levels of higher education degree programmes (ISCED 5A, 6).

They can be public, private and state (the University of Defence under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence and the Police Academy under responsibility of the Ministry of Interior). Public institutions are established by law and are legal entities *sui generis*. Private institutions of higher education are a relatively recent addition to the system, made possible since 1999. Public and state institutions are financed from the national budget, while private institutions obtain their funding from other sources, primarily from fees. They may obtain funding from the Ministry of Education only if they are non-profit and the funding is quite rare.

The act distinguishes between universities and non-university institutions. Universities can offer programmes of all three types (levels), Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral. Other non-university institutions should provide mainly Bachelor's programmes, but they may offer Master's programmes if they have accreditation. They may not offer doctoral programmes. There is a three stage progression for higher education with Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral programmes. The Bachelor’s degree programmes are intended to provide the qualifications for practising a profession as well as for continuing to study in a Master’s degree programme.

The higher education system

There are 26 public, 46 private and 2 state higher education institutions: 29 are universities (24 public, 2 state and 3 private), 45 are non-university type (2 public and 43 private). 18 non-university type higher education institutions provide next to Bachelor's degree also Master's degree programmes. Bachelor's degree programmes draw on current knowledge and methods while also including, to the extent required, theoretical knowledge. Their standard length is 3-4 years which comprises 180-240 ECTS credits.

Master's degrees promote the acquisition of theoretical knowledge based on current scientific and scholarly knowledge and lead students to apply this knowledge and develop their creative facilities. Their standard length is 1-3 years which comprises 60-180 ECTS credits. Depending on the nature of the degree programme, accreditation may be given to a Master's degree programme that does not follow on from a Bachelor's degree programme (a long cycle Master's degree programme). In this case the standard length of studies is no less than four and no more than six years, which represents 240-360 ECTS credits.

Doctoral degree programmes are aimed at scientific research and independent creative activities. The standard length of studies is no less than three and no more than four years. Studies within the framework of Doctoral degree programmes are subject to individual curricula under the guidance of a supervisor. The first entry into higher education is conditional on passing the matura exam and entrance exams, access to a Master's degree programme following a Bachelor's degree programme is conditional upon the Bachelor's qualification, and for admission to a doctoral degree programme the completion of studies in a Master's degree programme is required. All degree programmes offered have to be accredited; accreditation is awarded by the Ministry of Education on the basis of the opinion of the Accreditation Commission for a period of maxi-

mum of 10 years. In case the Accreditation Commission's statement is not positive, a higher education institution does not receive accreditation for a respective programme, i.e. it is not allowed to accept students and award degrees. All degree programmes are accredited with their curricula and modes of delivery. According to the law there are three modes: on-site, distance or a combination of these (combined studies). The standard length of studies is calculated for an average study (work) load and expressed in academic years. In Bachelor's and Master's degrees each academic year represents 60 ECTS credits. Study is completed by a state examination. For Bachelor's programmes this normally includes the defence of written thesis, and for Master's or doctoral degrees the defence of a Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, respectively, is required.

The pre-Bologna period in the Czech higher education

The higher education system in the Czech Republic underwent fundamental changes after the collapse of the communist regime in November 1989 – that time still in the common state of Czechs and Slovaks, since 2003 the higher education systems of the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic started developing independently.

Already in May 1990, the new Higher Education Act was passed (No. 172/1990 Coll.; hereinafter “the Act of 1990”). The Act of 1990 formed bases for the release from the totalitarian, centrally driven Soviet-like system. It restored academic freedom and self-governance to higher education institutions¹, though they continued to be state organizations. It also returned research to higher education institutions: during the previous communist regime most research was carried out at the Academy of Sciences. One major

¹ In one direction the decentralisation went too far as the faculties became legal entities, which later proved to be not reasonable.

change in the institutional governing structure was the introduction of Academic Senates as self-regulating bodies. This enabled higher education institutions to be run without strict central control. They became fully responsible for curriculum development that raised the need of quality assurance system. The bases were laid by establishing the Accreditation Commission. The Act of 1990 introduced a possibility to provide a “new” degree which did not have tradition in the Czech Republic, a Bachelor’s degree. The degree was defined as “*a self-contained part of higher education studies*”² after completion of which a graduate could be awarded the Bachelor’s degree. In the first half of 1990s the higher education system was composed of only one type of state higher education institutions, which provided Master’s programmes, average duration of 4-6 years, as well as doctoral programmes, most of them new, that replaced the advanced studies ending with the title Candidate of Science (CSc.). The newly introduced possibility of awarding Bachelor’s degree to those who fulfilled *a self-contained part of higher education studies* was used only in limited cases and the Bachelor’s degree was for a long time considered only part of higher education studies and neither students nor the public accepted this title as a worthwhile academic degree.

The system was developing rapidly, new institutions were established, numbers of students grew rapidly, new programmes developed and new curricula were designed. Students and teachers started travelling around Europe and world. Conditions and international developments in which the Czech Republic was participating thus required legislative changes again and again and on a larger scale. For this reason, work on drafting a new higher education act started before 1995, with the final version being passed after long-lasting discussions in 1998. The new Act on Higher Education Institutions (Act no. 111/1998 Coll., hereinafter The Higher Education Act) took into account positive experiences gained during pre-

² I.e. part of the traditional long Master programme.

vious development and laid down several important changes which started an institutional and programme diversification. The act enabled transfer of state property to the ownership of higher education institutions, which was connected with a change in their status from state to public higher education institutions. The Higher Education Act opened a possibility of establishing private higher education institutions as well as new arrangements for their financial management aimed at supporting diversification of financial sources, including the introduction of what was termed study-related fees³. The quality assurance system was further developed and accreditation of all degree programmes became obligatory and new competencies were granted to the Accreditation Commission. The changes in the organization of units of public higher education institutions aimed at promoting institutional integration, with the only legal entities henceforth being higher education institutions, not faculties. There were changes in the competencies and responsibilities of governing bodies of public higher education institutions, and a new body - the Board of Trustees, involving people outside the higher education institutions, was established by the act. The Higher Education Act introduced an obligation for both the Ministry and for individual universities to handle a Strategic Plan of Educational and Scientific, Research, Developmental, Artistic or Other Creative Activities (hereinafter Strategic Plan), including annual updates, submit and publish an annual report on the activities and operations, etc.

Apart from the new legislation the development of Czech higher education was significantly influenced by active international policy and openness to international cooperation. In particular, the Tempus and later Erasmus played important role. Exchange of students and teachers contributed to the development of new disciplines and curricular changes. From the Community Educa-

³ Those students who do not finish their studies within the standard duration prolonged maximum one year are charged the tuition fees by the respective HEI.

tional Program Erasmus the Czech institutions took ECTS system and with other universities in Europe started implementation of the Diploma Supplement in an agreed common format recommended by the three intergovernmental organizations, the EU/UNESCO/Council of Europe. In 1997 the Czech Republic joined the group of countries which wanted to smooth recognition of higher education qualifications in Europe and signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention⁴, established the ENIC Centre and started work on the implementation of the change in the attitude to recognition which the Convention brought. The Czech Republic ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2000. The entry into the European Union (2004) meant a change in degree programs preparing students for the regulated professions – such as architects and doctors, in order to have the diplomas recognised in the whole EU. The Czech Republic cooperated closely with the Council of Europe and participated in the Legislative Reform Programme which helped for the new legislation being developed that time. It was also active in the work of the Higher Education and Research Committee of the Council of Europe (CD-ESR) which was in period 2003-2005 chaired by the Czech representative. The Czech Republic became a member of OECD and benefited from two evaluations this organisation carried out, first in 1991, the second in 2005-2006.

The main determinants of changes in the Czech higher education next to the Bologna process

The main changes in the Czech higher education system were caused next to the Bologna process, by the several strategic decisions among them mainly:

⁴ Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention no. 165 - Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon 1997.

1) The new public higher education institutions established outside traditional university centres which were usually born from existing faculties, in the early 1990's as an attempt to offer in each region quality higher education. In 1991 University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, University of West Bohemia in Plzeň, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, University of Ostrava, Silesian University in Opava and in 1992 the University of Hradec Králové were founded. All these institutions got university status. Apart from this many new faculties were established, many new buildings were acquired, refurbished and built, many new degree programmes were developed and introduced at already existing institutions. All this effort brought a marked improvement in the regional structure of higher education.

2) The White Paper of 2001 introduced the political decision to open a university to 50% of the population driven by an effort to offer Czech young people comparable possibilities to study as it was the case in advanced European countries. In 2000 the ratio of the higher education graduates of a particular age cohort was less than 15%, thus being one of the lowest among OECD countries and about a half of the EU average and many applicants who met the entrance requirements could not be admitted to a higher education institution. The decision to widen participation was supported by financial mechanisms; the formula funding was built mainly on the numbers of enrolled students (per capita).

The table below shows the growing interest as well as growing numbers of students newly admitted at higher education institutions in the period 2000 – 2009. The new enrolments in 2009 were more than 2.5 times higher than in 2000. The data signal that in 2009 the number of applicants slightly decreased as well as the number of registrations. The number of enrolled students (headcounts) still grew but only 1%. It is fair to say that in 2008 new changes in funding scheme which do not promote any increase in the number of new entrances to higher education were introduced.

Table 1: The number of application, applicants and enrolments in HEI (2000 – 2009) (rounded to thousands)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 **/
Applica- tions */	208.17	237.45	234.03	253.27	284.98	294.76	303.33	232.7	320.37	324.99
Applicants (head- counts) */	102.32	105	108.85	117.54	130.35	130.93	137.84	146.8	147.28	146.62
New regis- trations */	42.97	54.62	59.60	68.15	76.55	83.94	92.31	101.1	106.29	105.57
Newly reg- istered (head- counts) **/	43.71	51.67	58.28	66.52	72.20	76.21	85.48	92.73	98.73	99.82

Source: Centre for Higher Education Studies (*) and Institute für Information Education (**/)

3) There several attempts were at diversification institutions as well as the study offer. With growing numbers of students it was obvious that the existing university type of long Master's degrees could not be sufficient and offer enough possibilities for the diversifying student body.

There were two attempts for institutional diversification, in the first half of 1990's and in the end of the millennium:

The first attempt was to create a sector of vocational (professional) education within the Czech tertiary sector. It started as a project in the early 1990's of the last century and the aim was to provide professionally-oriented non-university tertiary education similarly to German and Austrian *Fachhochschulen* (Universities of Applied Sciences) or the Dutch HBOs. The new institutions, called "*tertiary professional schools*" began to emerge. They provided three to four years lasting vocationally oriented study. At the beginning of the academic year 1992/93 the Ministry of Education approved the activities of the first group comprising of twenty-one tertiary professional schools, in 1995/96 there were already fifty. To provide legal support to these institutions the Amendment to the Education Act of 1995 was adopted. The goals of tertiary professional schools were to "*develop and deepen the knowledge and skills obtained by secondary education, and provide comprehensive and professional education as well as practical training for the pursuit of specialized activities*" (the Education Act, § 92).

These goals are further specified and developed in several documents dealing with the education policy and/or the tertiary education system as a whole; however, the tertiary professional schools did not come under competence of the Higher Education Act but under the Education Act⁵ dealing altogether with pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary professional education.

⁵ Zákon č. 561/2004 Sb., o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání [The Education Act]. http://www.msmt.cz/Files/DOC/Skolsky_zakon_a_zakon_o_ped__prac_190-04.pdf, accessed 11/05/2011.

Tertiary professional schools are in the competence of the regional authorities. In parallel, by the Amendment of 1995 post-secondary studies of one to two years, a wide spread form of post-secondary education connected with secondary schools, was cancelled. As a result, these schools have started work on the establishment of tertiary professional studies, exceeding thus the total number of tertiary professional schools soon up 150. This change did not prove successful for the sector of vocational/professional tertiary education in the Czech Republic. Most of these institutions stayed organizationally and personally closely connected to a secondary vocational school with similar aims. Some institutions, meanwhile, transformed into higher education institutions, in majority private, or were integrated into public universities. Today there are more than 180, relatively small institutions which have altogether less than 30 thousand students.

The later attempt to institutional diversification was the establishment of new non-university higher education institutions. Since 1999 The Higher Education Act enabled establishment of private higher education institutions. It was expected that these institutions will offer programmes in fields of study and in areas in which public tertiary education was underrepresented. Furthermore they were expected to concentrate mainly on Bachelor level of studies. This has happened only to a certain extent. Majority of private higher education institutions operate in regions with a sufficient number of potential applicants for study. E.g. currently, more than 20 out of 46 private higher education institutions are located in Prague. Private higher education institutions, enrol 17% of students. Many of these institutions see their development in becoming universities or offer at least Master's studies. In 2009 they offered 213 accredited degree programs, 69% being at Bachelor's level and 27% at Master's level. Three private institutions have got university status, i.e. they provide degree programmes at all three levels, including doctoral degree programmes.

The consequence of not fully successful diversification was that the massification of higher education in the Czech Republic took place mainly at public universities. Today there are less than 30 thousand students at TPSs, at non university higher education institutions approximately 36 thousand students while at universities there are about 350 thousand (330 thousand at public universities). The third attempt to diversification was offered by the Bologna process, this time not for the institutional but for a programme diversification. Bologna degree structure offered more opportunities, new exit as well as entrance points and thus more study paths. It was expected that the programme diversification and the diversified student body will promote also institutional specialisation and consequently the institutional diversification. With the growing interest more often people who had different abilities, social background and experiences and consequently also expectations started applying for higher education. It was supposed that the Bachelor's degree study programmes create an opportunity to diversify learning paths. Some students were expected to leave for the labour market with the Bachelor diploma, some to continue in a consequent Master's degree programme and the traditional long Master's studies could serve for those disciplines where the nature of studies does not allow restructuring.

However, the Bachelor's degrees, from several reasons, some of them being described below in the chapter "*Restructuring of studies*", were accepted as the full reasonable higher education qualification. A stricter legislative norm pushing higher education institutions to structure programmes to a given deadline was necessary. Moreover majority of graduates after completion a Bachelor's degree programme continue in Master's studies. Thus the massification of higher education was not only performed at the public universities but majority of higher education graduates finish with the Master's qualification.

The Czech Republic in the Bologna process and the Bologna process in the Czech Republic

If you ask an academic what Bologna means for him or her probably the answer will be “*Restructuring of long diploma studies into Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees*”. Thus at least in the Czech Republic the changes in degree structure of higher education could be considered a flag ship of the Bologna process. The Czech Republic has actively participated in the Bologna process since its beginning. Already in 1998 the former Minister of Education, Jan Sokol, recognised high potential of the reforms and of the joint cooperation of European countries introduced in the so called Sorbonne Declaration and signed it in the name of the Czech Republic. His successor, Minister Eduard Zeman, participated at the Conference in Bologna (1999) and invited all Ministers to meet at the next conference in Prague in 2001. Since then, the Czech representatives actively collaborated on the implementation of the Bologna goals and principles, taking part in the work of the Bologna Follow up Group (BFUG) and in the numerous Bologna seminars and conferences. The Czech Republic has participated in all subsequent ministerial conferences, trying to contribute and actively shape the emerging European Higher Education Area. As the Presidency country to European Union (2009) the Czech Republic chaired the BFUG towards the ministerial conference in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in April 2009 at which the Ministers discussed “Bologna” priorities for the next decade.

Ministerial conference in Prague in 2001

Two years after Bologna and three years after Sorbonne, European Ministers responsible for higher education, representing 32 signatories of these documents met in Prague. The meeting was held at the

Prague Castle under the auspices of the President Václav Havel and was personally attended by 24 ministers. One of the main priorities was to reaffirm the will to continue the implementation of the principles of the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations, so that by 2010, the ambitious targets of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) were met. Prague to hold this meeting was chosen as a symbol of an attempt to involve the whole of Europe in the process as well as the shine of the upcoming enlargement of the European Union. In this aspect the meeting created the opportunity for wider openness also for others, outside European Union member or candidate countries, that had expressed an interest to participate in the Bologna process. As a result Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey were accepted as new members. In total, representatives of 36 European countries met in Prague. Additionally to widening participation of non EU countries in the Bologna process the Prague ministerial conference could be characterised by openness in several more directions. Today we can hardly imagine that Bologna issues are not widely discussed with universities and equally extensively also with students. However, originally the Bologna process was established as an intergovernmental initiative and only the Prague Ministerial Conference engaged higher education institutions and students into the Process. For the first time next to the governmental representatives Presidents of Rector's Conferences or representatives of associations of university and non-university colleges, eminent personalities as well as students were invited to discuss with the ministers and contribute to future development of EHEA.⁶

Next to the universities, students and new countries the Prague ministerial conference invited representatives of intergovernmental organisations, namely the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES. The ministerial conference was

⁶ The ministerial conference was preceded by the 1st Convention of European Universities in Salamanca and Students' Convention in Gothenburg that gave the opportunity to both, HEIs as well students to discuss and adopt common messages that were later conveyed the ministers gathered in Prague.

preceded by the 1st Convention of European Universities in Salamanca and Students' Convention in Gothenburg that gave the opportunity to both, higher education institutions as well students to discuss and adopt common messages that were later conveyed to the ministers gathered in Prague. More openness concerned also the future priorities of the EHEA. The Prague Communiqué added two important policy areas. These were lifelong learning as an essential concept of the EHEA to increase competitiveness, and improvement of social cohesion and quality of life for students and staff. Having social dimension of the reforms among the action lines was one the first results of students' involvement in the Bologna process. The implementation of lifelong learning and social dimension of the Bologna process has been, almost ten years after the Prague summit, brought reasonable attention of Bologna countries. They remain among main priorities for the next Bologna decade (by 2020). Not surprisingly stocktaking of these two policy areas aiming at looking for common European approach as well as exchanges of good experiences and practices is an important part of the comprehensive report on implementation Bologna process being prepared for ministerial meeting in Bucharest 2012.

In Salamanca European universities and their networks and organisations acknowledged the role and responsibility higher education institutions have with regard to building EHEA and stressed the role of quality assurance: "*Quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area*" (Message from Salamanca, 2001). Equally Prague ministerial conference stressed that for any progress in creating EHEA, it is necessary to ensure quality education and "*that the quality of higher education and research is and should be an important determinant of Europe's international attractiveness and competitiveness*" (Prague Communiqué, 2001). Ministers called on universities, national agencies for quality assurance and the European Network for Quality Assurance

in Higher Education (ENQA) to create a common reference framework for discussion and dissemination of best practices and to “*design scenarios for mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/ certification mechanisms*” (Prague Communiqué, 2001), which must be based on mutual trust of all parties involved. Later on this attempt led to elaboration of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, prepared in cooperation of ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB⁷ and adopted by the Bologna Ministers in Bergen, as one of the pillars on which the EHEA has been being built. In Prague for the first time at wide European platform “courses and degree curricula offered in partnership by institutions from different countries and leading to a recognized joint degree” were discussed. (Prague Communiqué, 2001) The governing structures of Bologna process, i.e. Bologna Follow up Group and basis for the Bologna Board, that time called preparatory group were laid out.

“Bologna” as the catalyst of the Czech Higher Education

In 1999 the Czech Republic was in a slightly different position than majority of European countries. Since 1995 an ongoing discussion concerning changes in legislation was being held. It reflected the latest developments including those leading to the adoption of the Bologna Declaration. In 1998 the new Higher Education Act was adopted by the Parliament and when signing the declaration, the Czech Republic already had relatively modern legislative framework which created good bases for implementation of the Bologna principles and priorities. Bologna process thus became an important catalyst of implementation of this new legislation. As already mentioned above, in parallel “Bologna” was expected to contribute

⁷ ENQA - The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education; EUA-The European University Association; EURASHE – The European Association of Higher Education Institutions; ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe

to diversification of higher education and become an important instrument which helps to accommodate starting massification of the higher education system. See e.g. the White Paper (2001) which presumed on one side that 50% of the respective age cohort will have access to higher education, on the other, only a half of the Bachelor's degree graduates were expected to continue studies in Master's degree. Introduction of a Bachelor's degree was opened already by the Act of 1990. But the definition of the Bachelor's degree as "*a self-contained part of higher education studies*" proved not to be fortunate. The degree was considered as a part of higher education studies and even deepened the prejudices as well as the lack of willingness in the society towards this degree to be recognised as a full and reasonable higher education qualification. Even if the Higher Education Act (1998) already defined the degrees fully in line with the later Bologna qualification framework, there is no surprise that the higher education institutions started using the two-cycle structure as an option very carefully. Majority of students were still admitted to the long Master's degree programmes. When a necessity for some amendments to the Higher Education Act (1998) arose in 2001 more strict push towards two-cycle structure of study programmes was one of them. The 2001 Amendment to the Higher Education Act stipulated that the applicants could be admitted to study in accredited long Master's degree programmes only until the end of 2003 at the latest. After this date, in majority of disciplines, students could newly be enrolled only to first year of a Bachelor's degree. Since 2004 the number of students in Bachelor's and (consequent) Master's degree programmes was growing, while the number of students in the long-cycle Master's programme was decreasing as demonstrated by the tables 2 and 3 below.

Support schemes for implementation of national reforms

The Bologna goals became an organic part of national strategy expressed mainly in the Strategy Plans of the Ministry, covering periods of five years. The first Strategy Plan of the Ministry was designed for the period 2001-2005, the next two strategies for the period 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 respectively. Similarly to the Strategic Plan of the Ministry, the act requires all higher education institutions to elaborate their own strategic plans; both, the Ministry and higher education institutions have been obliged to update their strategies annually, which offer an opportunity to take account of all new development trends and to be flexible in reacting to international developments. The Act requires discussions about the strategy plans between the higher education institutions and representatives of the Ministry. This has become an opportunity for consideration of possible ways of harmonizing the plans of higher education institutions with the goals of the strategy of the Ministry, and this process has contributed to better understanding of aims and ideas on both sides. The Ministry decided to support the implementation of strategy plans by launching new scheme of support called Programmes of Developments. Priorities of the Strategy Plans of the Ministry have been reflected in the Programmes of Developments through which the part of the state budget (approximately 6% of the budget for teaching activities) has been allocated to higher education institutions. The funding has depended on congruence between the strategy plans of individual institutions and the Strategy Plan of the Ministry. Each public higher education institution has been invited to submit projects that fit in with the programme priorities.

The changes in degree structure as well as implementation of other “Bologna” reforms placed a burden on the shoulders of institutions concerning amount of work as well as their cost. To support the higher education institutions the Ministry used the scheme of

strategic planning and Programmes of Development and Bologna priorities have become important parts of the Programmes of Developments. The higher education institutions could receive funding for restructuring the long Master's programmes and preparation of the new Bachelor's and consequent Master's degree programmes for accreditation, the projects could support implementation of Diploma Supplement in the recommended international format, ECTS credit systems, preparation for the Diploma Supplement and/or ECTS Label certificates, development of joint degree programmes, student and academic mobility, in case of academics mainly incoming possibilities, etc.

Restructuring of studies

The process and the results of restructuring of studies seem nowadays to be much more complex and problematic than originally expected. In strategic documents, next to the White Paper 2001 mainly in the Strategy Plans for periods 2001-2005 as well as 2006-2011, it was expected that the first cycle degree (Bachelor's degree) becomes the main stream of higher education and only roughly 50% of Bachelor graduates will continue in Master's degree. Furthermore it was expected that the diversification of programmes will lead to the division of labour among institutions and will enable that the institutions and/or their parts could concentrate more on a certain level(s) of degree programmes and associated research, development, innovations and/or creative activities and start designing their future particular and specific missions, thus improving their efficiency as well the efficiency of the whole system. On one side it was considered the way how quality higher education will become more accessible to diverse population of students and learners, and will provide them with a good background for various positions in the society, and, on the other side, a

way how to preserve and maintain the high quality of university sector of higher education.

As already mentioned, the Higher Education Act (1998) created fully compatible and structured legislative framework for the qualification structure requested by the Bologna Declaration and the 2001 Amendment pushed institutions to restructuring in much more massive way. Since 2004 Master's degree programmes have built upon the Bachelor's degree program, unless the disciplines in which the nature of learning has required otherwise⁸. Most Master degree programs were accredited in the form of consequent Masters and the most intensive work on the structuring of studies was conducted within the period 2001-2003. Table 2 illustrates the growing numbers of students who were admitted and the fact that they were enrolled mainly into Bachelor degree programmes.

Since 2001 the number of students admitted into Bachelor's degree programmes grew 4.5 times while the number of students admitted into long Master's degree programmes decreased from almost 36 thousand to 6 thousand (6-times). As a result of the 2001 Amendment to the Higher Education Act the great reduction in the number of students enrolled in long Master's degree programmes was between 2002 and 2003 (18%) and between 2003 and 2004 (further 17%). The second great relative reduction in enrolments to the first year of the traditional Master's degree programmes came recently, between the years 2006 and 2007 (20%) and mainly between 2008 and 2009 (37%) as a result of finalising the restructuring of studies in several disciplines which were most controversial, e.g. the teacher training. For a long time a discussion on restructuring law, teacher education, psychology, architecture, and some artistic disciplines was led.

⁸ The Section 42, (2) stipulates: "Master degree programmes follow on from Bachelor degree programmes; the standard length of such a programme is no less than one and no more than three years. Depending on the nature of the degree programme, accreditation may be given to a Master degree programme that does not follow on from a Bachelor degree programme (a long-cycle Master degree programme). In this event the standard length of studies is no less than four and no more than six years."

In some disciplines the studies remained non-structured; in particular the general medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, teacher training for primary education and law and jurisprudence. Altogether, there are mainly regulated professions treated by the European Union directives. Discussion is still ongoing in some areas, such as psychology or architecture and therefore both models can be found side by side. Table 3 shows the numbers of students in different types/levels of degree programmes.

Table 2: New enrolments in Bachelor and long Master degree programmes (2001-2009)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bachelors	21,609	33,240	48,069	60,987	69,080	76,566	86,202	91,545	99,225
Change in % from the previous year	no date	53.8	44.6	26.9	13.3	10.8	12.6	6.2	8.4
“Long” Masters	35,977	31,852	26,120	19,018	16,811	14,424	11,487	9,964	6,285
% change from the previous year	no date	-11.5	-18	-17.2	-11.6	-14.2	-20.4	-13.3	- 36.9
Total	54,623	59,603	68,154	76,551	83,943	92,308	101,101	106,285	105,570

Source: Centre for Higher Education Studies and Institute for Information on Education

Table 3: Numbers of students in different types/levels of degree programmes (2000-2009) (rounded to thousands)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bachelor	34.72	43.04	60.85	90.2	123.23	154.12	182.14	208.38	230.62	245.29
Master	131.7	135.08	132.37	123.88	107.31	93.46	79.482	65.2	53.48	79.79
“Long” Master	11.34	12.03	12.85	14.2	17.21	23.98	35.95	51.49	66.34	46.17
Doctoral	15.29	16.48	18.06	20.03	21.43	22.32	23.32	23.99	24.61	25.87
Total */	190.19	203.5	220.26	243.8	264.89	289.64	316.5	344.62	369.62	389.23

Source: Centre for Higher Education Studies and Institute for Information on Education

**/ The total number does not match the totals of the sums representing the types of programmes. The data are based on individual data and some students study in more degree programmes in parallel.*

Majority of degree programmes were successfully restructured, however the table 4 clearly shows that high percentage (60%) of Bachelor's degree graduates has continued in Master's studies already in 2002 and these numbers even grew to 76% at present.

Table 4: Bachelor's degree graduates continuing in the Master's degree programmes (2002-2009)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bachelor graduates	7,543	7,695	9,966	14,617	19,643	26,031	30,571	35,049
Out of it continuing in a Master's degree programme	4,582	4,478	6,051	9,511	14,054	19,526	23,241	26,568
% of Bachelor graduates continuing in a Master's degree programme	60.7%	58.2%	60.7%	65.1%	71.5%	75.0%	76.0%	75.8%

Source: The database of the Education Policy Centre, Faculty of Education of the Charles University

By 2006 the ratio of the higher education degree holders among graduates of a particular age cohort doubled in comparison to 2000 and reached 30%. By 2009, the ratio not only grew above the EU average but extended to roughly 40%. Vast majority of these graduates have been Master's degree holders. The complicated situation will even worsen in upcoming years as the quantitative expansion of higher education will combine with a demographic

decrease⁹. If taken into account that this quantitative growth is performed mainly at universities and at Master's level it seems to be obvious that this might challenge the quality of higher education. This situation is caused as in many European countries by numerous reasons. The following might serve as an illustration. When restructuring the long 5-year degree programmes some institutions divided them in two parts rather than they really created new programmes. Only few of them consulted the new degrees with employers/ application sphere. This has led to the lack of knowledge what a graduate of this non- traditional degree knows and is able to perform. There is misinterpretation of the Bachelor's degree, being understood as only part of studies not as a full higher education qualification, played a role as well.

It is necessary to add that the Czech Republic has had a well designed system of vocational education at secondary and postsecondary level which also has contributed to lack of understanding what the role and position of a Bachelor's degree qualification should be, both among employers and wider public, and sometimes even among academics. In many disciplines there has been a lack of information on (and therefore understanding for) the Bologna reforms and the degree among teaching staff and students. There is also a hesitation that it is possible to have Bachelor's degrees that give access to further studies and in parallel qualifications for the labour market as the Bologna process requires. If academics themselves are not sure about it they can hardly persuade the employers or wider public about credibility of this degree.

This development was also supported by the way how public funds were distributed. Large part of the budget for teaching was allocated on formula basis. The formula funding mechanisms have

⁹ The age cohorts affected by the second demographic decline will have been reaching the higher education age, which means that before 2015 the higher education age cohort will decrease by one third.

been based almost exclusively on numbers of students. A university has been receiving the same amount of money for a Bachelor's and Master's degree student. Taking into account the "reputation" of the Bachelor's degrees, there has not been surprising that majority of students wanted to continue and that higher education institutions were accepting them for further studies. At the same time, however, the higher education institutions started realising that if the situation continues for future the quality of higher education will be affected in a negative way. It would be interesting to carry out research in the Czech Republic. The admission of students to restructured degrees started in a massive way since 2004, in some disciplines even later and only now more statistical data have been available. There is also some patience needed. If we look back at the period for which these reforms have been taken place, it is only approximately 10 years. It is a very short period to develop a new higher education degree that did not have tradition in the Czech Republic as well as in many countries of Continental Europe. In spite of all the described problems, it is possible to say, that the Bologna reforms were successfully implemented. What is needed now is a more discipline-specific approach to restructured programmes and created degrees. It is necessary to map the situation and to look what has been working and where some more creativity and innovation is needed. It is believed that the methodology of "*learning outcomes*" and its use to place the degrees into the National Qualification Framework compatible with the overarching Qualification Framework for the European Higher Education Area will help to evaluate the programmes, re-think where necessary and make the qualification structure more transparent and understandable for wider public.

Lifelong learning

The current fundamental change in the relation between demand for tertiary and higher education (the number of applicants) and supply (the number of study places available) will cause that some specialisations and/or faculties will not have enough applicants (mainly those coming directly from a secondary school) who would be interested or even “willing” to study there. An opportunity for higher education institutions is to open for new public. The Bologna process understands the lifelong learning as a framing concept that “involves obtaining qualifications, extending knowledge and understanding, gaining new skills and competences or enriching personal growth. Lifelong learning implies that qualifications may be obtained through flexible learning paths, including part-time studies, as well as work-based routes“ (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009,1). This requires first of all a change in the attitude of majority of higher education institutions. The major challenge is that higher education institutions should adopt their offer of degree programmes as well as courses in order to satisfy not only various expectations, needs and interests of fresh secondary school graduates but also those of adult learners including individuals who already hold a higher education qualification and do not necessarily want to study for a full new degree. Rather they might be looking for re-qualification or just want to deepen and broaden their backgrounds. This will not be possible without recognition of prior learning - including that gained outside the higher education institutions or tertiary professional school as well as in informal learning settings, e.g. based on practical experience. This is practically a new issue for Czech higher education institutions and in general it is possible to say that in many aspects Czech higher education institutions are at the very beginning.

Future development

Also for future the Bologna reforms in the Czech Republic will develop together and interfere with other changes in the national higher education. Major changes are expected in the system of funding and during upcoming two years a new law for higher education sector should be developed. The Ministry has been taking steps to change gradually the focus of higher education institutions, mainly by means of the priorities of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry for 2011-2015 (supported by the Programmes of Development) and changes in the basic formula funding scheme.

The higher education institutions have been no longer supported in their efforts to attract more students. The incentives are targeted to bring the attention to Bachelor's degree as the full and recognised higher education qualification. It is expected that more and more Bachelor's degree graduates will be entering the labour market after graduation. The major issue discussed in the Czech Republic now is the draft law which has been opened for public discussion in February this year. The Higher Education Act (1998) was amended 19 times and it is felt that a new modern legislation should be prepared. The draft law presents to some extent a kind of stocktaking of the last two decades of higher education developments and aims to codify the changes in the sector as well as modify it to serve better the future needs of society. Some of the principles are:

The quantitative expansion of higher education should be closely connected with *institutional as well as programme diversification*. The main aim is to connect the mission of each higher education institution with its performance in teaching and in research and innovation (creative activities). This should be further developed through diversified standards for accreditation of institutions as well as through the funding mechanisms based on outcomes and performance of the higher education institutions. The

major change lies in the system of accreditations. The draft suggests shift from present situation when all degree programmes or even specialisations have to be accredited to the future when the accreditation will be given to a higher education institution. The procedure will be based on two reviews – the assessment of the internal evaluation systems of higher education institutions and on accreditation of larger fields of studies, i.e. groups of degree programmes with a common focus. For the time being there are roughly 40 such fields suggested.

Other changes concern *higher education governance* as far as the relation between state and higher education institutions as well as the internal governance of the institutions. It aims at leaving the attitude of the Higher Education Act (1998) which represents quite detailed regulation of internal processes at higher education institutions. This is not feasible any longer as the law cannot cover diversity of higher education landscape now the less for future. It strives to create just a frame and open more space for specificities of particular higher education institutions. This at the first site right attitude is accompanied with a heat debate whether the suggestions do not rather decrease than increase the level of real autonomy of higher education institutions.

Another hot issue in the draft law is a suggested change in *understanding the academic careers*. So far the “docent” and the “professor” were understood as the highest academic degrees and the draft law turns this into a practice obvious in majority of other countries where professor is associated with a working position. Also this proposal has a very limited support among academics. The changes are suggested in the *structure of higher education qualifications*. The law presumes finalising the Bologna reforms and understanding the Bachelor’s degree as the basic and full higher education qualification. It suggests a new qualification in the Czech system – professionally oriented “short cycle qualification” (as defined in the Bologna process) having range of 120 ECTS

credits (2 years of standard length). It also suggests some changes concerning the *rigorosum* (Advanced Master's degree), sometimes called "small doctorate". To promote more flexibility it proposes more flexibility in learning paths including recognition of prior learning.

Next to changes in accreditations further major changes should be brought into *the system of quality assurance*. The existing legislation stipulates the duty for each higher education institution to establish the internal quality assurance system and make the results of internal evaluations public; however, it does not say anything more. Thus the practice is quite different at different institutions – some use quite sophisticated widely recognised professional models for quality assurance, such as EFQM Model Excellence or ISO, some limit their activities only to students' quality assessments. The draft law aims at strengthening the accountability of institutions for quality assurance, implementation of legal standards and rules for internal quality assurance in accordance with the principles adopted in the Bologna process (European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG). Two-level reviews of the institution, of the internal quality assurance system and evaluation of teaching and learning (the assumptions, processes and outcomes) in larger fields of studies) are suggested. The change also concerns the organisation of the national evaluation system namely establishing of a professional organisation (for the time being named the *Agency for Quality in Higher Education*), responsible for conducting external evaluations has been suggested. The plan is ambitious, however it is a long way to go and all these suggestions have first to be discussed and widely accepted by the higher education institutions as well further important stakeholders in higher education. The first round of discussions is to be held by the end of the year when the draft law should be submitted to the Government.

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Bologna Hungaricum

Károly Barakonyi

Where does the world go?

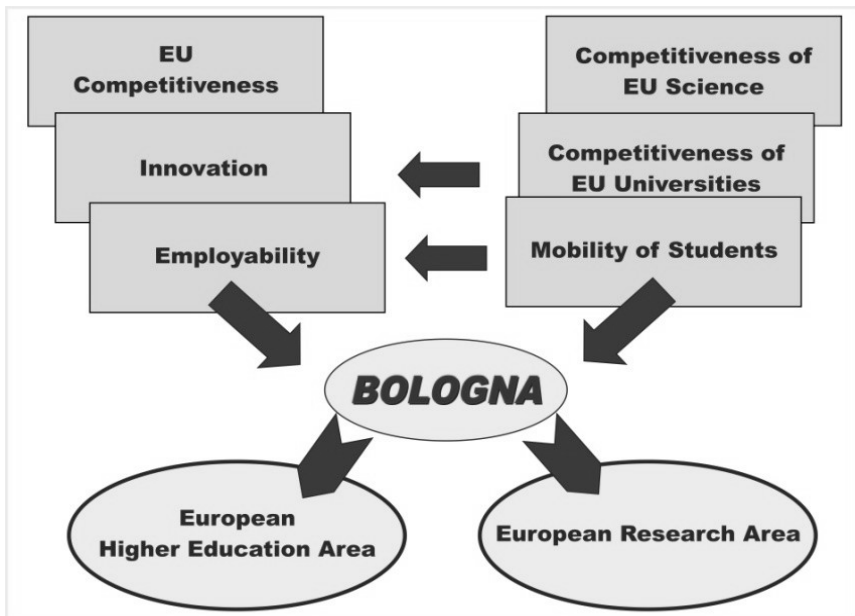
The effects of globalization

During the past 20-30 years there have been radical changes going on throughout the world: the process known as globalization created a new reality. Today technological-scientific achievements produce high technology demanding world-wide structures of research and development, production, marketing and sales systems. National markets, the traditional scenarios of transactions have been relieved by huge international regions. The European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Far East have taken over the role of national markets and competition is going on worldwide: 80% of world trade takes place amongst and within the segments of the Triad. This competition is running for free capital – the question is which nation, which region is able to magnetize capital needed for development of high technology and production based on high technology.

Recent processes of higher education, the Bologna Declaration, generating the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area each serve the purpose of improving competitiveness of the European Union, its nations and their universities (see Figure 1). The state of development of educational (even more importantly higher educational) systems has become a significant factor of competitiveness. Besides favourable financial conditions the state of development of in-service and higher education systems determines the magnetism of a particular nation for free capital. Investors want to be concerned that a nation or a region is able to

satisfy the needs of global economy, i.e. whether it has the capacity to train well and qualified masses of employees who are mobile and flexible for further training. An important prerequisite of employability is the realization of student mobility during one's higher education – to arm students with knowledge about the culture and social relations of the EU and its partner countries skills applicable. This is one of the central goals of the Bologna process: to answer the challenges of student mobility – in order to ensure conditions of forthcoming employability, the *first outcome of student mobility*.

Figure 1: Competitiveness and the Bologna process



Europe has lost her leading role concerning both research and higher education after the Second World War. Her new position can be demonstrated by the number of Nobel Prize Winners of “hard” sci-

ences, such as physics, chemistry, medical science, economy (see Figure 2). The number of foreign students in Europe has decreased while magnetization of the USA towards the gifted ones has become even stronger than before (brain drain). Most of the Nobel Prize winners living and working in the USA was not born in America, including a dozen geniuses born in Hungary. We call this feature the *second outcome of student mobility*: the capacity to magnetize as many talents as possible from foreign countries in order to increase the scientific and academic potential of the country of reception.

Figure 2: Geographical distribution of Nobel Prize winners according to the location of their activities

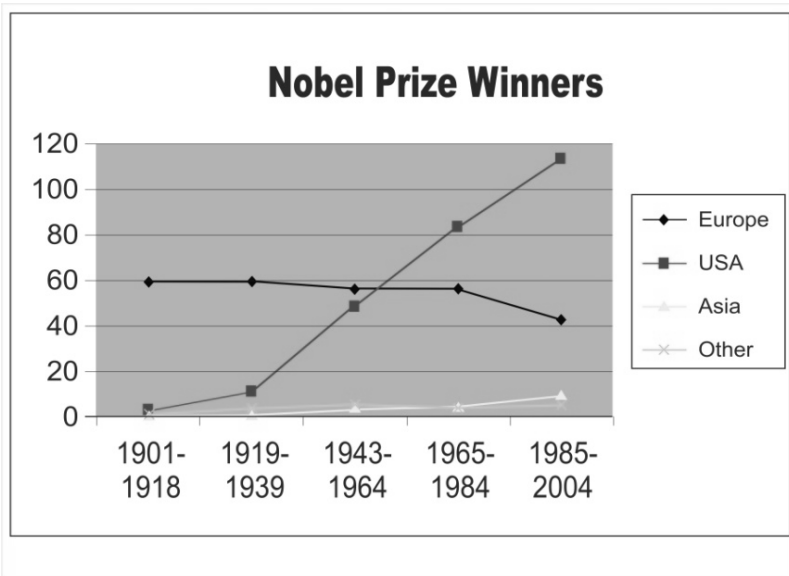


Table 1 and table 2 show tendencies of student mobility in some significant regions (North America, Western Europe, Central Europe and Eastern Europe). France (63,000 people), Germany

(56,000 people), Italy (39,000 people) and Spain (27,000 people) are the countries that forward the most students (numbers in brackets) in Western Europe. Canada sends 41,000 people whereas the USA forwards 39,000 students. In Center and Eastern Europe the most active forwarders are Turkey (52,000 people), Russia (34,000 people), Poland (27,000 people), Bulgaria and the Ukraine (25,000 people each), and Romania (21,000 people). The most significant recipient is the USA (673,000 people) and the most determinative countries in Europe: the United Kingdom (300,000 people), Germany (260,000 people) and France (238,000 people).

Table 1: Student mobility – North America and Western Europe

Countries	Outwards	Where the students are going to?	Inwards
Austria	11,679	Germany (6,924), United Kingdom (1,308), USA. (899), Switzerland (550), France (495)	31,101
Belgium	10,729	France (2,841), United Kingdom (2,418), Netherlands (1,987), Germany (1,021), USA (823)	26,202
Canada	38,847	USA (27,017), United Kingdom (3,890), Australia (3,100), France (1,267), Germany (556)	40,033
Cyprus	17,381	Greece (10,048), United Kingdom (4,208), USA (1,562), Bulgaria (443), Hungary (297)	5,282
Denmark	6,318	United Kingdom (1,662), Sweden (995), Norway (868), USA (859), Germany (697)	18,120
Finland	9,719	Sweden (4,054), United Kingdom (1,883), Germany (1,056), USA (619), France (332)	7,361
France	53,350	Belgium (12,458), United Kingdom (11,295), USA (6,818), Germany (6,678), Belgium (6,238)	237,587
Germany	56,410	United Kingdom (12,096), USA (8,745), France (6,698), Switzerland (5,823), Austria (5,657)	260,324
Greece	49,631	United Kingdom (22,826), Germany (7,577), Italy (7,159), France (2,288), USA (2,126)	12,456
Iceland	3,007	Denmark (1,081), USA (488), Sweden (434), United Kingdom (317), Norway (251)	10,201

Table 1 (continued): Student mobility – North America and Western Europe

Countries	Outwards	Where the students are going to?	Inwards
Israel	11,974	USA (3,474), United Kingdom (1,300), Germany (1,116), Latvia (1,092), Jordan (1,060)	no date
Italy	38,544	Germany (8,111), Austria (6,149), United Kingdom (5,215), France (4,686), Holy See (4,103)	40,641
Luxembourg	6,743	Germany (2,071), France (1,709), Belgium (1,324), United Kingdom (833), Belgium (818)	652
Malta	731	United Kingdom (476), Germany (50), Spain (44), Italy (39), USA (30)	409
Netherlands	11,440	Belgium (2,887), United Kingdom (2,473), Germany (1,876), USA (1,505), Sweden (630)	20,531
Norway	14,732	United Kingdom (3,653), Australia (3,227), Denmark (1,524), USA (1,471), Sweden (1,406)	11,060
Portugal	11,213	France (2,701), United Kingdom (2,649), Germany (1,922), Spain (1,377), USA (880)	15,483
Spain	25,691	United Kingdom (6,105), Germany (6,014), France (3,928), USA (3,631), Belgium (1,042)	15,051
Sweden	13,392	United Kingdom (3,379), USA (3,116), Norway (1,107), Australia (1,049), Germany (839)	32,469
Switzerland	9,545	Germany (2,169), USA (1,561), United Kingdom (1,467), France (1,463), Italy (1,075)	64,046
United Kingdom	23,542	USA (8,439), France (2,611), Germany (2,154), Ireland (2,132), Australia (1,652)	300,056
USA	41,181	United Kingdom (13,381), Canada (4,393), Australia (3,439), Germany (3,419), France (2,687)	572,509

Source: Makovényi 2007 (conference slide)

Besides the long term importance of reaching out for the most talented ones the mobility of 2 million students represent a significant *income source* for universities that struggle with everlasting financial difficulties. The sum of tuition fees is *the third outcome of student mobility*. Today Europe does not seem to win the international competition running for students, and Hungary has an insignificant role in it. This is more than pitiful because it is the Bologna process itself that offers a framework for competitiveness within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Unfortunately the higher education system in Hungary is not compatible regarding its structure or its content of the most significant actors of the educational market. In order to close up to the most efficient economies however this prerequisite should gather ground.

Table 2: Student mobility – Central and Eastern Europe

Countries	Outwards	Where the students are going to	Inwards
Albania	13,214	Italy (8,494), USA (916), Greece (725), Germany (625), Turkey (608)	458
Belarus	10,490	Russian Fed. (6,010), Germany (1,737), Poland (1,088), France (465), USA (422)	2,428
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9,572	Germany (2,801), Croatia (2,273), Austria (1,308), USA (433), Denmark (432)	no date
Croatia	9,955	Germany (5,437), Italy (1,357), Austria (947), USA (660), Slovenia (425)	2,836
Czech Republic	6,666	Germany (2,483), USA (1,052), France (662), Austria (439), United Kingdom (359)	10,338
Estonia	3,721	Russian Fed. (1,217), Germany (728), Finland (528), USA (271), Sweden (242)	1,090
Hungary	7,750	Germany (3,097), Austria (1,279), USA (997), France (536), United Kingdom (371)	12,226
Latvia	3,730	Russian Fed. (1,022), Germany (916), USA (424), Estonia (305), United Kingdom (186)	2,390

Table 2 (continued): Student mobility – Central and Eastern Europe

Countries	Outwards	Where the students are going to	Inwards
Lithuania	6,926	Germany (1,701), Russian Fed. (1,690), USA (691), Poland (628), Latvia (507)	689
Poland	28,786	Germany (15,417), France (3,270), USA (2,913), Austria (1,172), Italy (1,002)	7,608
Republic of Moldova	7,784	Romania (4,111), Russian Fed. (1,267), Germany (597), France (463), Bulgaria (382)	2,502
Romania	20,680	France (4,474), Germany (4,220), USA (3,320), Hungary (3,147), Italy (1,225)	9,730
Russian Federation	34,473	Germany (11,462), USA (5,532), France (2,597), Kazakhstan (2,177), United Kingdom (1,878)	75,786
Serbia and Montenegro	10,038	Germany (3,747), Hungary (1,194), Austria (1,007), Italy (712), France (489)	831
Slovakia	14,458	Czech Republic (6,938), Hungary (2,441), Germany (1,640), Austria (1,387), USA (585)	1,651
Slovenia	2,524	Germany (628), Austria (593), Italy (326), United Kingdom (265), USA (209)	963
The Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	5,348	Bulgaria (2,690), Germany (819), USA (349), Turkey (278), Albania (177)	113
Turkey	52,048	Germany (27,582), USA (11,398), France (2,273), United Kingdom (1,960), Austria (1,820)	12,729
Ukraine	25,188	Germany (7,618), Russian Fed. (6,841), USA (2,004), Poland (1,809), Hungary (1,005)	15,622

Source: Makovényi 2007. (conference slide)

The first revolution of universities

Globalization processes have reached out to higher education – and due to this phenomenon institutions of higher education are forced to make significant changes: today we witness the second revolution of universities. Since their formation in the 12th century it has always been the *social factors* that determined the mission and purposes of universities.

- The training and research profiles (theology, law, medicine, liberal arts) of the *universities of the Middle Age* acted upon the demands of the era: they came into existence due to outward press. The church, the emperor, the king, the monarch as the founders of institutions determined the goals and fields of higher education and research.
- It has been social changes, outward power that led to *the first revolution of universities*. The formation of national-liberal states required a demand of new forms of leadership and new types of organizations. Relations between states and economies have also changed. At the last years of the 17th century Industrial Revolution brought a huge economic development and set new requirements of skilled workers.

These changes of social demands swept away the universities of the Middle Ages and created three different kinds of university cultures: the British, the Napoleonic and Humboldt's model. Three different solutions for the very same problem: How can universities answer the demands of the new socio-economic challenge? Within a couple of decades each European country adopted one of these models or a combination of them.

The second revolution of universities

The second revolution of universities is a result of globalization, the technological-scientific revolution of our days. Just as the universities of the Middle Ages had no longer been able to fulfil the requirements of the new nation states and those of the Industrial Revolution, the 200 years of experience of the British, the Napoleonic and Humboldt's model of universities have not proved to be capable to satisfy today's political, social and economic demands any more. Changes of university environment can be traced back to three different factors (Mora 2007).

- *Global society.* Labour market that has to be filled up by citizens trained at universities has changed. Due to the requirements of economic mobility an increasing ratio of graduating students go to work in foreign countries or become employed at multinational firms and companies operating in the home country. This situation requires non-traditional knowledge and competencies. The function of universities is not any more to fulfil the requirements of local labour markets but they have to be ready for the challenges set by global employability. We need to note that the Hungarian Bologna process not only neglects the needs of the European Union and global markets but also (as for the draft of the Higher Education Act 2011) seems to ignore those of the national economy.
- *Knowledge-based society.* Concerning the philosophy of the universities of the 19th century economic aspects remained hidden (the declared purpose of the Prussian university for instance is to seek and spread justice). The economic value of universities become expressed explicitly at the end of the 20th century: technological development can be maintained only if societies have highly qualified citizens. Knowledge and technology turn into key elements of economic and social development in knowledge based societies. Universities become the

engines throughout their research and innovation activities as centers of knowledge generation, as scenarios of knowledge, science and technology distribution and as locales of instruction, studies and technological transfer.

- *Universal higher education institutions.* Due to the needs for qualified workforce of our global world higher education becomes a part of mass education. Nobody argues that universities that had been set up in order to ensure elite education cannot fulfil the requirements of mass education – the need for reform is unambiguous. Institutions of higher education become universal in this way from several regards. On one hand universities become attainable for almost everyone: the ratio of those with A levels accepted at universities has never been as high as today. On the other hand geographical outreach of Hungarian institutions increased: they have started with departments abroad and also institutions of foreign universities have started in Hungary. Virtual universities demolish geographical borders. Universality is true in respect of the targeted age groups too. It is not exclusively those of 18-24 year-olds who can attend universities: institutions of modern higher education reflect on the needs of lifelong learning including professional, in-service and/or cultural studies. This is a totally different university with new goals, new methodology and teaching-learning techniques. Traditional ways of old-established institutions of higher education cannot keep pace with new challenges.

Considering the factors described above the second revolution of universities means that institutions of higher education have to undergo transformation because of the interests of societies, economies and that of their own. The prime movers of these changes can be found outside the walls of universities: the European Union, national governments, international organizations, employers and

stakeholders push forward and support this process of transformation although universities resist – most of the time. Originally universities are ultra-conservative agents: academic circles worldwide oppose to any change because of the intention of keeping certain values, traditions and autonomy. There were people demolishing appliances in times of Industrial Revolution who intended to save systems of manufactures and handcraft – still, industrial development could not have been stopped. What we really need to consider is that this story is not about the universities or the professors themselves. The stake is the well being of our societies, the founding of our future. And it is clear cut that determining forces come from the outside again. The Bologna process is the product of this second revolution of universities induced by globalization. In the forthcoming part of this study we are to see the main targets of this process and evaluate the changes of the Hungarian higher education – whether they are consonant to the international process and support its realization or not.

About the Bologna process

The European reception of the reform

Except from one country, Byelorussia, the EHEA colligates the whole Europe. A huge and united market of knowledge has started to formulate and the catalyst of this transformation is the Bologna process. Contribution to this process lies on a voluntary basis. Along local or national specifics each country has the right to differ from the declared basic principles of the Bologna process. They are free to do so because the commitments do not have a mandatory force. Not even the European Union has a compulsory educational policy (however the European Higher Education Area covers much wider space than the geographical borders of the EU) and the ministers who signed the Bologna Declaration did not agree to main-

tain the codification of each and every item of the agreement. Still, in case we alter the relevant governing principles we need to be sure of what it is that we actually disagree with, what goals of the Bologna Declaration we go against. We need to see clearly the discrepancies we end up with between the national educational policies and those of the European Higher Education Area, we have to ponder the consequences and decide whether we can take the responsibility of going our own (national) way. In case we intend to be competitive in the international market of knowledge than we need to compile EHEA-compatible educational structures. The realization of the Bologna process, constructing and implementing changes necessitates the reform of several other fields. A more harmonized, tight connection with the labour market becomes a necessity university governance has to be renewed. Inclusion of private sources (tuition fee, fund-raising) has to be considered and a new pedagogical paradigm has to be introduced (i.e. learner-centeredness instead of didactics, emphasizing competencies versus lexical knowledge). Also evaluation of universities (gradation, transparency) has to be taken into consideration. In the developed countries the expectance of the reform today can be described as satisfactory. After the initial fierce rejection according to a Gallup poll markers show a positive picture about the desired changes:

- We need to focus on average skills 76%
- Programs need to act upon the needs of the labour market 70%
- Partnerships with the business sphere reinforce universities 73%
- Universities need stronger self-governance 80%
- Fund raising leads to extra income and better achievement 73%
- Tuition fees are acceptable as they ensure extra income for universities 68%

The Hungarian Bologna process

Although as early as 1999 within the first circle Hungary joined the process, at the ceremony of the declaration only the deputy under-secretary represented our country (while other states sent their ministers of education to sign the document) and our government at the time had not made any further steps in order to realize the process. Substantive analytic and constructive work started in September, 2002 (by this time partner countries had accepted their new higher education acts containing the changes due to the frameworks of the Bologna Declaration) within the framework of the JEHEA (Joining the EHEA) project. The team of experts prepared a 2000 page long summary containing needs analysis, suggestions, manageability studies to serve as a basis for composing the new bill of higher education. A serious communication error followed the compliment of the project. The Ministry of Education encrypted the material so professional circles could not contribute to it. Only a 70 page long summary was published for social debate that proved to be unjustifiable under professional fire. The concept became ridiculous as early as in the first phase of its publicity as it had been changed literally week after week. Academic circles criticized it as they were afraid of losing their autonomy, traditions and the international respect of the Hungarian higher education. On the other hand due to governmental changes the issue became a subject of political rather than professional discussion although there was (and still is) a distinct professional demand for a National Roundtable of Higher Education. Three years after the ratification of new higher education acts of significant European states in 2005 the first version of the law was proclaimed. Because of political fights the most important initiatives such as tuition has been cancelled (2008) and the only constant activity concerning the act remains revision.

Unlike in Western European countries, the acceptance of the Bologna reform can be estimated moderate in Hungary. Unfortu-

nately, since 1999 university lecturers have not been involved in any form of discussion about the Bologna process, a widespread professional debate, which could enable to attract attention to the goals, values and the dangers of its defective realization, has not been organized. We lack academic debate, conferences and discussion forums of the issue. The monthly journal of higher educational issues was ceased by the ministry right at the time when spreading new ways of thinking, discussion and persuasion on elements of the Bologna process would have been needed indeed. This fact contributes to the true but sad reality that actors of Hungarian higher education do not see clearly the goals and significance of the Bologna process and do not have information about relevant changes abroad. Lack of information has led to such a narrow-minded process that cannot be connected to the European Higher Education Area. Consequently it generates a higher education system with significant disadvantage in competition and leads to the conception of a rather grotesque “*Bologna Hungaricum*”. Taking into consideration the Hungarian reality described above let us now examine what an ideal Bologna-structure should be like and how we can evaluate the relevant process we, Hungarians have been through.

The goals of the Bologna process and its implementations in Hungary

Starting with the Bologna Declaration in 1999, states, universities and other institutions of higher education began an intensive cooperation aiming at developing the European Higher Education Area. Besides declarations of bi-yearly summits several seminars and preliminary consultations have been organised in order to discuss occurring challenges and possible ways of their solutions. The European University Association (EUA) has taken an active part in these discussions through carrying out analyses and giving their

commitments. The documents they published contain important statements that are to be examined (altogether with those of the Bologna Declaration) in the following paragraphs concerning EHEA compatible training. These statements are being reflected by the realisations of the Bologna Declaration in Hungary, emphasising discrepancies and dysfunctions in order to point out fields that may be developed. In the case of correction of the most significant discrepancies the Hungarian higher education system with its institutions and students, the Hungarian society and economy could equally become more competitive.

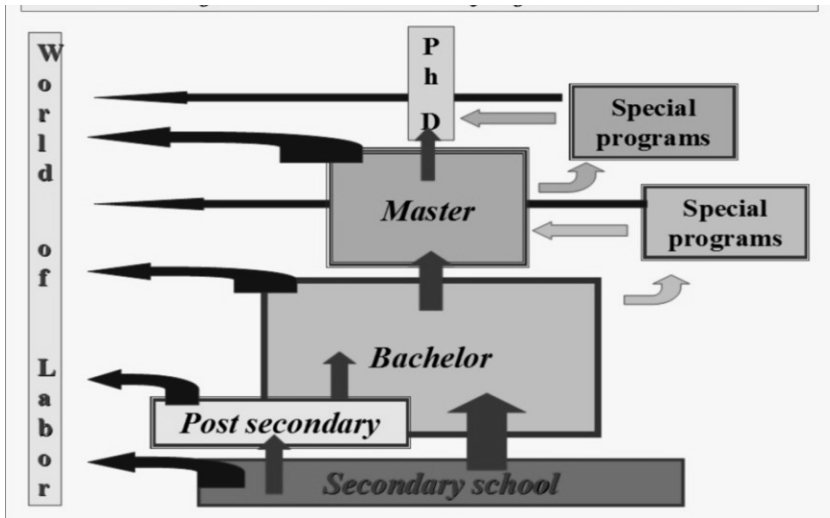
Improvement may lead to avoiding particular interests and focus on the goals of the Bologna process.

Transparency

1. Introduction of a training structure that offers easily comprehensible and comparable degrees (even applying diploma supplements) in order to facilitate employability of European citizens and competitiveness of the European higher education system.

The first part of the goal expressed above has significance because of transparency. This principle is important because its realisation results in the world of labour ensuring employability, in the competitiveness of European higher education system and that of the economy of the European Union. Through the introduction of the diploma supplement a part of the existing systems can be made compatible with the original goals.

Figure 3: The three-cycle structure of higher education



The three-cycle structure

2. Introduction of a basically two-phased training system: the undergraduate and graduate levels. The second phase requires the successful compilation of the first one, which has to take at least three years.
 - The undergraduate degree ensures a particular qualification so it can be applied at the European labour market.
 - The second phase has to eventuate in master or PhD degrees – due to the relevant higher education tradition of several European countries.

The two-phased structure was born as a shared European commitment – later on decision makers agreed to complement it with the PhD stage, this is why we call it a *three-cycle structure* today. The first cycle primarily covers mass higher education – this is the scenario of training that aims at satisfying the needs of modern economy. At this stage numerous well-trained and skilled professionals are needed armed with practical knowledge. Master's stage should

offer more theoretical, quality knowledge and at the final stage of the cycle the PhD level represents elite training. Applying this system the EU accepted the traditional linear training structure of Anglo-Saxon countries de-emphasizing the conventional continental dual system. This linear structure apparently meets the conditions of human resource demands of global economy to a greater extent and this is what leading European economic power has recognised. The structure grants flexible accommodation of ever-changing demands and it also means less risk of involving masses to higher education. Student mobility among different fields and institutions is also a significant marker of this pyramid model (lower stages available for masses while top stage offering elite status for a few). Introducing a basically two training cycle structure (undergraduate and graduate) is the essential goal within the Bologna process.

Successful compilation of the first cycle (which has to take at least three years) is the key to enter the second phase. Another Bologna goal is that the degree attainable at the end of the first phase can be applicable at the European labour market while the second cycle has to lead to a master's or PhD degree. The central idea of the process is the initiation of student mobility. Regarding the requirements of training and qualifications a proper solution would involve actors of higher education and those of the economy. Training requirements should be characterised by higher education while qualification markers could be circumscribed by representatives of professionals. Unfortunately partners of education (i.e. relevant actors of economy) do not represent their viewpoints and interests to a necessary extent. Measuring and analysing the needs of the labour market have not started up till most recently in Hungary. In this way the adequate results can only be considered when re-planning the Bologna structure. This is inevitable in the case we really do consider the Bologna criteria – as it is only a formality today, regarding its content remaining theory. At the moment institutions of Hungarian higher education offer 50 branches of training

within the following 14 fields: agrarian, humanities, social sciences, ICT, law, national defence / art of war, economy, technology / engineering, medical science, education / teacher training, sports, natural sciences, fine arts, civilization. An example of branches of a field is humanities (field) and Hungarian Linguistics and Literature, History, Modern and Antique Philology, Psychology, Liberal Arts (branches). Branches are divided to subcategories (subject areas) becoming realised in undergraduate courses and some majors even have specialisations. There have been 107 undergraduate courses accredited so far in Hungary and students can apply to study them at 1100 entries.

Accreditation of postgraduate courses has not closed down yet their number can be estimated around 500. Explicitly the courses are not divided into professional and academic ones either at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. Implicitly postgraduate courses suggest belonging to academic courses. Higher education courses in Hungary can be categorized as follows:

- *Post-secondary*, non-university level technical/vocational type schools (similar to American community colleges) require 120 credits and usually last for two years. They are considered to have a professional filter-role and their significance is due to the fact that they offer practical knowledge and skills.
- Most of the *undergraduate* courses consist of 180 credits and take three years to complete. In some cases another 30 credits have to be taken as field work for an extra term.
- Most *master* courses require 120 credits.
- Studying for the *PhD degree* requires a usually three year long period of instruction and research worth 180 credits, compiling and defending the doctoral dissertation have to happen after this phase.
- *Teacher training* has a slightly different structure. Kindergarten teacher candidates attend a three year long course which requires 180 credits. In order to become a primary teacher (of the

first four grades of schooling) one has to take an undergraduate course which takes four years, with 240 credits. In the case of teacher candidates for grades 5-12 one has to complete a masters' degree which takes 300 + 30 credits (theory and practice).

One of the biggest problems with the Hungarian structure is that it has come to being due to particular interests as a real Bologna Hungaricum. During its formation neither the national demands of the labour market or the intentions and structure of the institutions of the European Higher Education Area have been considered. While compiling the courses there has been a fight going on among traditional universities and colleges. The greatest intention of universities has been to have the exclusive right for running master courses and on the other hand colleges purposed to exclude universities from the accreditation of bachelor courses. The roots of this fight dates back to times when in 2000 mammoth institutions were founded in the capital, Budapest, integrating universities on one hand and at the same colleges on the other (Budapest Technical University versus Budapest Technical College and Budapest University of Economy versus Budapest College of Economy). As the philosophy of the Bologna process was public at that time, a more practical solution could have been the integration of both colleges and universities according to their academic fields. Development of undergraduate and postgraduate courses could have been carried out by common division of labour in order to avoid unnecessary parallelism of training. In the case of institutions of higher education in the country the solution could have been to enter into strategic alliance. Particular institutions could have specialised to launch undergraduate courses ensuring input for universities whereas others could have started with postgraduate courses. As the latter ones could have neglected undergraduate courses there was a chance to specialise in master and PhD courses and to develop as universities of research.

The other mistake we could not avoid concerns content. University professors have done their best to compress traditional basic university curriculum into undergraduate courses although those should not exclusively establish postgraduate studies but scenarios of mass education. As stated earlier at this stage training has to provide qualified workforce not only for the home economy but to the European labour market. Misunderstanding the role of undergraduate courses consequently resulted in uncertainty about the content of postgraduate courses as well. Instead of concentrating on the demands of the labour market postgraduate courses have become scenarios of a structure viable only in the imagination of some university lecturers.

Considering that the goal, content and function of postgraduate courses remained uncertain the undergraduate courses of the new structure had to be compiled without a clear goal of its outcome. We built the ground floor without having the plans of the first floor – at this phase of the reform we *lacked a structural approach*. Describing all these discrepancies show that the three-cycle structure in Hungary should to be renewed as soon as possible so that it would harmonize the specifics of mass education, and the real demands of socio-economic conditions. In its present state the Hungarian application of the Bologna process is inappropriate to realise the goals of the European Higher Education Area as a non EU conform reform cannot ensure active and profitable parts for the Hungarians within the European Higher Education Area.

Credit system

3. Introduction of credit systems – such as the ECTS – are the most appropriate ways of facilitating the mobility of students. Gathering credits outside institutions of higher education could be a great opportunity of lifelong learning.

This requirement of the Bologna process can be interpreted as the toolbar of the previous ones. It supports the mobility of students by easing their frameworks of timing – courses students have started can be modified during the time of training with less losings than previously in the traditional systems. Lifelong learning possibilities can be attached to undergraduate or postgraduate course through a system of credit approval. Many think that we have already finalised our credit system and do not recognize that it is only an instrument of a more important goal: the facilitation of student mobility. The current credit structure in Hungary had been characterised before anybody could foresee the main goal, without elucidating the principles of the structure.

Not even the requirements of mobility are satisfying through this system as mobility of students can be interpreted as a set of multi-dimensional expectations:

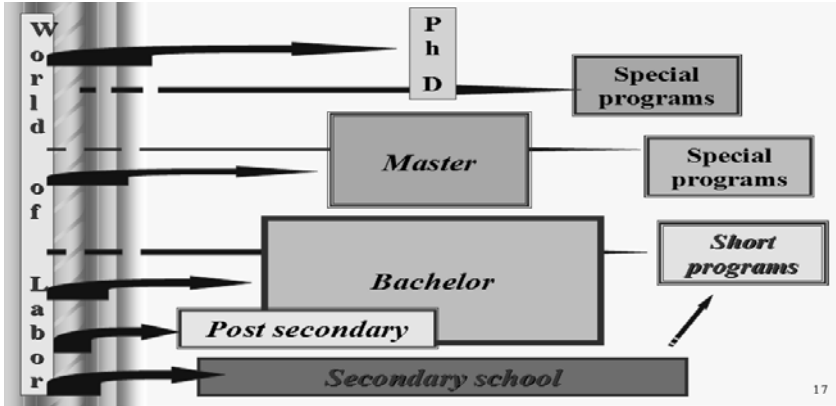
- More flexible (either faster or slower) advancement on a particular field of study.
- Opportunity of mobility among national universities – credit approval of performed studies at different institutions.
- Credit approval opportunities at different faculties of the same university.
- Credit approval of studies at universities of foreign countries.
- Intermittence – orientation to the labour market and returning back to studies after a while (the opportunity of lifelong learning) (see Figure 4).

Unfortunately, throughout the application of the Bologna process in Hungary opportunities given by horizontal mobility has not been recognized yet. There are only a few cases when within the undergraduate phase of training mobility may be realised after the completion of the first or second semester. In order to give wider space to such solutions more jointly built up modules would be needed. At the beginning of the training more subjects dealing with general

information and basic skills should be introduced that deal with essential demands regardless of further orientations of students. In practice we can trace its contrary. As early as in the first semester most of the time hard core professional basic subjects are offered. Consequently in the case of orientation change of students both the individual and society pays a significant price for maintaining an inflexible structure. The Hungarian Bologna process lacks an in-built flexibility. Financial pressure on institutions of higher education can serve as an explanation for the lack of mobility. Fiscal regulations do not support possibilities for students to change courses or institutions. Consequently credit agreements between institutions occur rather rarely concerning both national and international circumstances and accordingly the current Bologna structure does not favour mobility of students in Hungary.

The Hungarian way of realisation of the credit system operates against the relevant original goals and becomes a kind of “l’art pour l’art” game. It supports mobility of students to an extent that the individual can flow in the training tubes faster or slower in time. Mobility of students should cover much more complex issues. Cycles of the linear structure should harmonise the requirements of cross-mobility and be fitted into the structures of the undergraduate and graduate courses of significant institutions of the EHEA. Next the revision of the credit system should follow in order to serve the initial goal (i.e. mobility of students) as efficiently as possible. Regarding the realisation of cross-mobility the modular revision of the training structure is a must as it is a typical practice in countries of the EHEA. Finally bilateral-multilateral credit agreements should be made between national and foreign institutions of higher education. Documents of the Bologna process attract attention to these demands vigorously. Accordingly to the concept of lifelong learning, expanding the application of the credit system, credit accumulation to spheres other than gradual education has not been realised successfully in Hungary.

Figure 4: Lifelong learning – back to school from the world of labour



Supporting equality of opportunities and mobility

4. Supporting access to mobility with equal opportunities, fighting against obstacles, especially
 - access to studies, practical and relevant services in the case of students,
 - concern of social security (insurance) during the period of exchange programmes in the case of lecturers, researchers and administrative workers.

The issue of mobility arises both in the case of students and lecturers. It is concerned significantly within the European Union that mobility of the actors of the European Higher Education Area is granted as much as that of the actors of the labour market. Students who have the chance to study partly within countries of the European Union other than their own would most likely become more flexible and mobile later in the labour market. Mobility of students and professors also add to the development of the European identity. Successfully operating systems of social support, student loans, building and reconstruction of student hostels in the past few

years also serve the equality of opportunities. In spite of these actions the ratio of student mobility is relatively low in Hungary concerning both forwarding and reception of students.

Hungary seems to remain a modest contributor of this segment of the knowledge market – we receive 12,000 people from abroad. Unfortunately our country does not have the capacity to take the advantage of magnetizing talented students – a factor that could strengthen our scientific base. In case the quality of Hungarian higher education is as excellent as we tend to believe than it should expound a much stronger magnetizing force to the knowledge market than it actually does. We lack the basic, prerequisite conditions of this process: programs, curriculum and teaching material in foreign languages, harmonizing undergraduate and postgraduate programs with the countries of the European Higher Education Area, lecturers speaking modern foreign languages, quality infrastructure or the capacity of student hostels.

In order to achieve faster development in this field we should consider the Hungarian speaking students of our neighbouring countries as primarily partners of our strategic actions – at least we do not have to overcome language barriers in these cases. Sporadic Hungarians living in more developed Western European countries could contribute to this process by supporting foundations called into being with the purpose of granting these students at Hungarian universities.

Students going abroad using mobility opportunities are even less than those who come to us. As little as the 2-3% of the total number of students (i.e. 8,000 people) study abroad for no more than one or two semesters, they come back and stay in Hungary after graduation. Financial support is rather restricted for these students – exclusively offsprings of a narrow worthy social layer can afford longer, complete courses and receive degrees abroad. Multi-national firms are eager to employ graduate employees with experience abroad.

The question of quality

5. Supporting the development of European cooperation based on comparable criteria and methods concerning quality insurance

Transparency is only one prerequisite of mutual acceptance of degrees (i.e. the content of studies, the acquired knowledge and skills and fields of applicability). The evaluation and qualification of an organization independent from training has a similar significance concerning acceptability of degrees. Organisations responsible for evaluation and qualification have to operate along the same standards within the EHEA. Developing quality insurance control is desirable in order to increase the autonomy of institutions and reduce the role of the state concerning universities. The commitment of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee concerning quality is rather arguable. Quality according to them means the involvement of qualified lecturers (those holding at least a PhD degree) in higher education. This criterion is unacceptable concerning undergraduate training. Requirements of quality should harmonize the desired goals. Absolutism of academic measurement concerning undergraduate courses as their primary role is transition of practical knowledge and providing mass education. Instead of or besides requiring an academic degree for lecturers of undergraduate courses, involving experienced professionals of particular fields should have a greater significance. Roles of traditional universities have converted to the levels of master and PhD degrees. Undergraduate training cannot be considered as a part of university in its traditional sense. Masses of students cannot be trained for elite purposes – elitist training remains the challenge of further cycles of higher education.

The European Dimension of Higher Education

6. Supporting the necessary European concerns of higher education, especially curriculum development, trans-institutional cooperation, opportunities of mobility and integrated programs concerning studies, practical and research.

There are justifiable expectations concerning the EHEA besides satisfying economy-due mobility demands, such as to promote

- increasing the European identity of citizens,
- preserving the cultural inheritance of Europe,
- strengthening the role of the Europe as a determining actress of culture,
- cultivating and circulating (Hungarian) national culture and traditions,
- assist graduate-student to become intelligentsia.

Having been investigating dozens of applications of courses one can have an established view that course descriptions lack the dimension of the European Union as much as promoting markers of a future intelligentsia. Formulation of the European (EU) identity, preservation of the cultural inheritance of Europe should be apparent both in curricula and multi-dimensional trans-institutional relations. The existence of a future intelligentsia is probably more important than training experts more like professional barbarians.

Unfortunately the viewpoints described above lag behind during the realisation of the Bologna process in Hungary. Consequently the structure developed during the reform neither measure up to the Bologna criteria or the expectance of intelligentsia described in the Hungarian Higher Education Act.

The New Hungarian Higher Education Act in Progress about the Bologna process

After the elections of spring, 2010 the new government circulated the draft version of the new higher education act for public debate (the codification of its final version is estimated by the second half of 2011). This conception urges to extinguish the market driven approach of the relevant current legislation and intends to dedicate the new higher education act in service of *national* development and construction of national values. Its primary goal is to increase the educational level of Hungarian citizens serving the interest of present and future generations. *The mission and goal of higher education is to establish the intellectual and economic development of the nation* with a special focus on teacher training – the training of those who are responsible to teach and educate future generations. Below the reader is offered a review of basic principles concerning the Bologna process in the light of the changes compared to current legislation.

1. *Goals.* The essential goal of the forthcoming educational legislation is to ensure the reservation of traditional values of the Hungarian society and higher education. Its intention is to define and regulate higher education not as a service for profit but primarily as a means of public service of the state for the good of citizens of our days and their offspring. Requirements of affiliation to the EHEA or those of the European labour market in light of the Bologna process are not mentioned in the Preamble – these criteria are not mentioned as goals.
2. *Quality.* The concept of quality and its criteria are equally extended to several spheres of higher education: training, research and management.
3. *Correspondence of training, research and practice.* An interpretation based on Humboldt's concerns research in the draft. Due to fast development of modern science a significant part of

curricula becomes obsolescent in a relative short time. Follow up is ensured for those exclusively who are able to carry out research themselves or have access to practical knowledge continuously. Consequently the prerequisites of quality training are quality research and the harmonisation of research outcomes and practice. Authors of the draft seem to forget about undergraduate courses where transmitting timeless skills and knowledge is a must. Circulating the latest findings of research is a demand primarily at the PhD level and at research universities. The approach of the draft is rather elitist, neglecting the concept and requirements of mass education (and the draft even forgets mentioning this term).

4. *Distinction of colleges and universities.* Unlike current legislation the main responsibilities of universities and colleges become rather distinctive. Universities become scenarios of both training and academic workshops ready to hold their ground in the international competition. Ensuring training for professional work remains the primary goal of colleges.
5. *Cyclic (Bologna-structured) teacher training.* Hungarian higher education follows the recommendations of the Bologna Charta with a strong concern of local circumstances and following the guidelines of governmental decisions. According to the new concept Hungarian higher education operates within the framework of cyclic training, except for fields denominated in the act (medical sciences, law, veterinary sciences, arts, architecture), which need to be trained in a non-cyclic system for 10 or 12 semesters. Concerning the peculiarities of professional fields and the demands of the labour market the forthcoming act is offering the possibility of developing non-cyclic training in fields other than listed above (in brackets). In other words the draft gives an opportunity to reconsider the cyclic structure of training, regarding courses operating with this structure today and allowing the traditional, non-cyclic option for further

courses. “*Openness of the training structure*” is emphasised in the concept of the draft.

6. *Academic and professional undergraduate training.* A new element of the concept is that concerning undergraduate training it distinguishes between academic and professional branches. Compilation of the professional branch ensures the student to become a full potential professional at the labour market. Academic undergraduate courses offer wider and deeper theoretical education and less practical training as possible input for quality postgraduate courses. Those who do not wish to continue their studies on master level can complete their thesis in the semester following their final term of undergraduate course.
7. *Teacher training.* Autonomy of teacher training institutions according to the new act becomes more restricted. Government control is well reasoned as it regulates state education – a party that is also becoming centrally operated. In order to become a teacher trainee candidate one has to complete two A-levels and pass an exam of professional appropriateness. They have to specialise in two major fields and are to be trained for 5 (theory) +1 (practical) years. After completing the fifth year of their studies students receive their absolutory and start two semesters as student teachers (residents). At the end of the second residential semester candidates take a professional qualifying exam and become teachers (MEd).
8. *Post-secondary, non-university level technical/vocational training.* Post secondary technical and/or vocational training becomes the responsibility of institutions of higher educations. Credits attainable during these courses become accountable in undergraduate courses. Conversion from undergraduate courses to post secondary courses also has to be granted.
9. *State support.* Institutions of higher education run by churches (recognised by the Hungarian state) are granted state support.

Institutions of higher education maintained by the private sector and/or foundations can be supported only by the state exclusively in the case of state order except for students studying in their final academic year.

In summary we can conclude that the concept of the new Hungarian higher education act show distinct markers of deflection from the European Higher Education Area and from the recognition of the circumstances of the education market.

Concerning the principles of the Bologna Declaration intentions of reversion can be observed. The *most significant ideas* of the new concept different from and/or contradictory to those of the Bologna process can be summarised as follows:

- Outlining national goals versus those of the Bologna process.
- Negligence of education markets, consideration of higher education as public service.
- Granted state support exclusively for institutions run by the state or churches recognised by the state. Institutions maintained by the private sector and foundations can be supported by the state exclusively in the case of state order.
- Negligence of the demands of the European labour market – emphasis on satisfying the demands of the national labour market. No disposition concerning ways, methods, instruments of adaption or clues of responsibilities.
- Elitist tendencies. Negligence of peculiarities of mass education, challenges of lifelong learning and opportunities of interchanges between the world of labour and education.
- Orders the introduction of non-cyclic courses in teacher training explicitly and suggests the implementation of similar structures in other fields implicitly.
- Concerning undergraduate training distinguishes between academic and professional branches.

Accordingly, the process of reconstruction concerning Hungarian higher education seems to avoid the opportunity of integration into

the EHEA. Relevant principles that have already contradicted some essential goals of the Bologna process may position Hungary even further from the current higher education trends of the European Union.

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Social Perceptions versus Economic Returns of the Higher Education: The Bologna Process in Poland

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Introduction

The Bologna process in Poland, as in Central Europe generally, was seen prior to the EU enlargement in 2004 as an effective avenue to integrate Polish universities with their Western European counterparts. Poland was among the initial signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration in 1999. In post-communist Europe, the Bologna process was often viewed as “a political option aiming at ingraining itself into European values” (Gorga 2007, 62, Tomusk 2006, Dobbins 2011). In the present study, the Bologna process is viewed through the lenses of the end product of reform initiatives it has been promoting in the last decade: in this case, a coherent system of three degrees – the bachelor, the master, and the doctorate. And in particular, it is focused on the changing social and labour market perceptions of the bachelor degree during the implementation of the Bologna process in Poland. Enhancing “employability”, following Teichler (2011, 4-5), is viewed here as an increasingly relevant “additional” objective of the Bologna process, its “core” objective being enhancing mobility.

In Poland, throughout the 2000s, one of the main challenges to the implementation of the requirements of the Bologna process was the introduction of the three cycles of studies, and in particular – a clear separation of first and second degree studies. The master/bachelor split was present in Polish higher education already in the 1990s – but since its appearance, bachelor degrees had low social legitimacy and limited acceptance by the labour market as higher education credentials. The emergence of the bachelor degree

in the 1990s was closely related to the emergence of the private sector in 1991, and its phenomenal growth in the following two decades (Kwiek 2011a, Kwiek 2010, Slantcheva, Levy 2007, Wells et al. 2007). The history of the emergence of the private sector and policy attempts to keep 90 percent of private higher education institutions at the lower, bachelor's level of studies (*studia licencjackie*) throughout the 1990s, as opposed to the public sector with master degrees offered (*studia magisterskie*), had exerted powerful influence on the implementation of the Bologna process in the 2000s. And at the core of discussions about the Bologna process, there were not ECTS points and the modularization of studies, or the internationalization of studies and student mobility, or the social dimension of studies and the recognition of diplomas: the core of Polish discussions, for a number of years, was dominated by a single theme – the future of the bachelor degree in a country in which higher education credentials, for generations, meant the master degree and in which a lower level degree was offered throughout the 1990s by, generally, inferior by quality and academic standards, private higher education (see Kwiek 2007, 2011b; Slantcheva, Levy 2007).

It was already clear in 2005 when a new Law on Higher Education was introduced that the future of the bachelor degree, a major component of Bologna reforms, would depend on its labour market acceptance. The study argues that the Bologna-related developments leading to clear separation between first and second cycle of studies have been partly successful: while the social acceptance to the first degree is still low, and the vast majority of students express their willingness to continue their studies into the second degree, the response of the labour market, as viewed through recent empirical evidence, has been very positive. Much more positive than both educational research and labour market research was showing in the last few years (see, for instance, UNDP 2007).

The study is divided into the following sections: the present introduction; the degree structure in Poland in a European comparative context; the bachelor degree in Poland from a historical comparative perspective: legal changes and institutional transformations; the degree structure and the labour market response: review of recent empirical evidence; the bachelor degree and private higher education; and conclusions.

The 1990 Law on Higher Education – which made possible a thorough transformation of Polish higher education system after the collapse of communism in 1989 – already at that time allowed for the introduction of the bachelor degree. In the vast majority of study areas in the public sector, though, studies have been offered in two cycles only following the 2005 Law on Higher Education which was prepared, inter alia, to allow the Polish system to be adjusted to the Bologna requirements (Antonowicz 2012, Kwiek, Maassen 2012). The bachelor degree emerged in the 1990s in the private sector, and in the 2000s, following the Bologna process, a decade later as a mandatory degree in both sectors. The two decades of interrelations between public and private sectors in higher education, of differences in social prestige of education derived from both sectors, and changing labour market attitudes to the bachelor degree in the last few years are important to understand the Bologna-related developments in Poland. The study argues that the negative impact of low social perceptions of the bachelor degree has been decreasing and the signs of the acceptance of the degree come from the labour market.

The degree structure in Poland in a European comparative context

Is the increasing acceptance of the bachelor degree in the Polish labour market (which will be shown in more detail further in the study) an indirect product of Bologna process developments? The

answer is positive: as long as the first degree was offered almost exclusively by the emergent private sector in higher education in the 1990s, it both had low social prestige and was refused as appropriate higher education credentials by the labour market. Recent national data tend to suggest that while the social prestige of the bachelor degree is still low (and Polish students report in comparative European surveys a very high level of willingness to continue their studies to get the master degree), its market value, viewed through the proxy of earning premiums on higher education, is quite high (OECD 2011, 138-175; for the origins of the human capital approach used today by OECD in its changing methodologies for measuring returns to education, see in particular Schultz 1963, 38-64; Hansen 1970, 157-195; Becker 1993, 59-160; Keleey 2007, 94-112; Psacharopoulos 1987; Carnoy 1995, 113-190). As Theodore W. Schultz pointed out in *The Economic Value of Education*: “schooling is the largest investment in human capital. ... most of the economic capabilities of people are not given at birth or at the time when children enter upon their schooling”, Schultz 1963). Consequently, especially if universal fees are introduced in the Polish system in the coming years (on the critical role of fees for the future of the public/private intersectoral relations, and the survival of the private sector under declining demographics, see Kwiek 2012b), the bachelor degree may have much higher acceptance among students and graduates than previously expected in higher education literature – which would be in turn an undeniable success of the Bologna process in practical terms (see a recent comparative assessment of the employability of bachelor graduates in Europe in Schomburg, Teichler 2011, and results of scholarly-initiated graduate surveys in Schomburg, Teichler 2006 and Teichler 2007, Allen, van der Velden 2007, coming from two large-scale European research projects: CHEERS and REFLEX, or “Careers after Education – a European Research Study” and “Research into Employment and Professional Flexibility”).

The bachelor and master degree split accepted to varying degree throughout Europe (see Schomburg, Teichler 2011) is one of the major impacts of recent changes in higher education policies coordinated at the European intergovernmental level within the Bologna process of the integration of higher education. Although initially the Bologna process was clearly an intergovernmental initiative, increasingly, in the second half of the 2000s, the role of the European Commission was becoming more and more important in it. Also the official references of the European Commission to the Bologna process made it clear that it is viewed as an important component of the (supranational, rather than intergovernmental) Lisbon Strategy, now replaced with a new Europe 2020 strategy (see Maassen, Olsen 2008, Amaral, Neave, Musselin, Maassen 2009, Kwiek, Maassen 2012, Zgaga 2006). Not only other social strategies, including Education and Training 2010 (now replaced with Education and Training 2020) and European Social Strategy (ESS) were subsumed under an economic supranational Lisbon Strategy “for more growth and jobs” – but also the intergovernmental Bologna process (an important part of which is a three-cycle structure of studies) was subsumed under overall economic strategies of the European Union. As commentators note, “the landscape of higher education is changing. Global forces are felt by all. ... Universities cannot ignore the Bologna meta-trends; it is a total package that embodies cultural and pedagogic shifts in order to embed learning outcomes, credit accumulation and transfer, qualifications frameworks at both national and supra-national levels” (Birtwistle 2009, 61). A consistent three-cycle study structure is a trademark of the Bologna process in many countries, as are intra-European student mobility and graduates “employability”, discussed in the present study. In Poland, the introduction of the structure, including the implementation of clearly distinct first and second degrees, was perhaps the biggest challenge of the process so far (now that the structure has been introduced throughout the sys-

tem, the most challenging area for the future seems to be the life-long learning agenda and the implementation of the national qualifications framework, related to the EQF, the European Qualifications Framework). In some European countries, historically, the bachelor level of studies was sufficient for university graduates to enter the labour market with higher education credentials. In others, higher education credentials in the labour market meant the completion of studies at the master's level. Examples of the former countries included the UK and Ireland, as well as the USA, Canada, and Australia. Examples of the latter countries included in general those countries in which the traditional model of the university based on Humboldt's ideas was particularly strong: the Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Austria, or Switzerland. Former Yugoslav countries used "specialist" degrees, closer to master degrees, though. The historical differences continued until recently (and still do) and were expressed most often in the level of implementation of the new degree system (generally lower for the latter countries compared with other European systems), with different speed of the implementation of the Bologna process. In Poland, the implementation of the two-tier structure of studies meant, above all, the transformation of unitary master level studies into two types: bachelor and master. But short-term master's studies (mostly two years) appeared in Poland in the public sector in the middle of 1990s and were provided mostly to graduates from the bachelor level studies in the private sector who were seeking master degrees (and they were called supplementary studies, or *studia uzupełniające*).

In some countries, the division between bachelor- and master-level studies was widely used already in the 1990s (i.e. in the decade prior to the emergence of the Bologna process) or much earlier but the split had different meaning in different places. In Anglo-Saxon countries (the UK and Ireland in Europe), bachelor-level studies were leading to socially recognized higher education credentials. In such European post-communist transition countries as

Poland, in contrast, bachelor studies were introduced in the 1990s without initial social recognition – they were not viewed as leading to complete higher education. Bachelor studies in the 1990s and at least in the first half of the 2000s were viewed by both the society at large and by the labour market as a necessary but only the first step in higher education, leading to complete higher education when master degrees are obtained. Consequently, the vast majority of bachelor-studies graduates from private sector institutions continued their education, either in public sector higher education institutions, or in those selected (less than 10% in the 1990s) private institutions which had the legal right to offer master degrees.

Viewing the last two decades of massification processes in Central Europe (the same processes lasting at least one more decade in Western Europe), bachelor studies were especially important for those systems of higher education which wanted to expand rapidly, and in particular – to expand through the newly founded private higher education (Poland being the best example; other examples in the region include also Bulgaria and Romania; see Kwiek 2009, 2010). Slower expansion of educational systems in the 1990s, immediately after the fall of communism, in general, occurred generally in those regional systems which did not introduce private provision in higher education on a large scale (Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic).

The spread of the idea of two-cycle studies in practice in the European Higher Education Area in the 2000s was successful: between 2003 and 2007 (*Trends III* and *Trends V* reports of EUA, EUA 2003, EUA 2007), the share of responding institutions stating that they already have three-cycle structure of studies in place increased from 53% to 82%. Historically, while in 2003 Poland was among countries most aggressively implementing the three cycles (being among 7 countries with the level of implementation among their institutions in the 70-85% range, and with only 7 other countries scoring higher), in 2007 Poland was in exactly the same range

of the level of implementation (again 70-85%) but by that time it was surpassed by 19 other countries which scored 85-100% (out of 36). Thus in Poland during those years the implementation of the three cycle structure slowed down, while other countries were implementing it on a large scale. In 2008, though, Poland was again among the European leaders in implementing the Bologna process: it was among 6 European countries in which the proportion of graduates following the Bologna structures was 100% (together with the Nordic countries – Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – and Ireland, OECD 2010, 71). The 2010 *Trends VI* report (EUA 2010) shows a much more homogeneous picture: Poland again belongs to the 97% of countries reporting the 85-100% range of the level of implementation of the three cycles (with only 3% of countries belonging to the other range reported, the 70-85% range, EUA 2010, 35).

Among the European transition countries, the three cycle system in 2007 was implemented in a bigger share of institutions than in Poland in such countries as Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania and most post-Yugoslav countries, and in the same share of institutions as in Romania and the Czech Republic. On a European scale, the lowest level of implementation (0-50%) in 2007 was in Estonia and Hungary, as well as in Sweden, Germany, Austria, Spain and Portugal (EUA 2007, 17ff.). In 2010, the implementation of the three cycle system was already in the highest range of implementation in all European countries, including all above countries lagging behind, except for three post-communist countries: Hungary, Lithuania, and Estonia (in the range of 70-85% of the reported level implementation). A recently reported implementation of the three cycle structure of studies in Europe, seems almost complete, although an EUA report admits that the picture is “more complex” and that there is the “continues coexistence of old and new structures” (EUA 2010, 35).

Poland (following the Law on Higher Education of July 27, 2005, which introduced the three cycle structure to Polish higher education system) until 2008, was still maintaining a parallel system in which old-type 5-years-long master studies existed alongside new bachelor (3-3.5 years) and master (1.5-2 years) studies. In 2008, the enrolment in the former type of studies, except for some specific study fields like medicine or law, was abandoned (a similar case was Germany, the biggest system of higher education in Europe, in which a new system existed alongside an old one, and institutions continued to enrol students into the old degree programs, *Trends V* 2007, 22). In more analytical terms, the international impact on the domestic policy decisions leading to the new law was through “diffusion” rather than “translation” (as Gornitzka 2006, 21 summarized the difference between the two mechanisms, “in the case of diffusion, what is imported remains unchanged”). The Bologna process, and further steps towards the European integration of higher education (e.g. the European Qualifications Framework), were imported without changes in definitions of problems or solutions. According to data provided by the *Bologna process Stocktaking Report 2009*, Poland was showing mixed successes in the three areas evaluated with respect to the degree system: (1) for the “stage of implementation of the first and the second cycle”, Poland received score 4 (out of 5), (2) for the “access to the next cycle”, Poland received score 5, and (3) for the “implementation of national qualifications framework”, Poland received a low score of 2.

Economic arguments in favour of strengthening the role of first-cycle studies in higher education stress that the cost of studying shorter (3-3.5 years instead of 5 years) in systems where fees are low (or none) is lower to the taxpayer. In Europe, the role of fees in university budgets has increased substantially: between 1995 and 2008, its share increased by 50%, from 8% to 12% in EU-25 (CHEPS 2010, 25; the highest share of fees in the composition of revenues in public universities in 2008 was in Ireland –

35%, followed by Croatia – 30%, Romania, Lithuania and Slovenia – 25% each, the UK – 24%, and Poland – 22%). Not surprisingly, systems with highest share of revenues in public institutions are either Anglo-Saxon, or post-communist transition countries. Fees could be thus combined with shorter periods of studies to either lessen the stress on public funding for higher education or to further increase enrolments in higher education in general.

The acceptance of the bachelor level of studies as a “valuable degree leading to suitable jobs in the labour market” on the part of students differs in Europe substantially but overall almost 40% of students do not agree with that statement (39% in 2009, EC 2009). Also the evaluation of the bachelor studies on the part of academics differs substantially between European countries. So not only students’ attitudes toward the bachelor/master degree split are mixed; equally mixed are attitudes of academics in Europe (and if academics themselves are not convinced about the value of the bachelor degree in the labour market, they can hardly transfer the conviction to their students and the labour market). As Harald Schomburg concluded in a recent (2011, 271) study on European bachelor graduates which showed that the transition rate from bachelors to masters studies among university bachelor graduates is about three quarters: “certainly, a mix of warnings by university professors about the incompleteness of Bachelor study at universities, half-hearted curricular reforms, cautious views by employers and uncertainties and high aspirations by students has led to such high rates of further studies”.

Eurobarometer’s survey among academic staff on *Perceptions of Higher Education Reforms* shows the extent to which the two-tier structure of studies is still a very controversial issue in many European countries. Bachelor-degree usefulness in the labour market differs substantially both in Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe. With the statement, “first cycle graduates (Bachelor) will find suitable jobs on the labour market”, on average, 39% of sur-

veyed academics disagreed and about a half (49%) agreed. The strongest support, not surprisingly, comes from academics from two Anglo-Saxon countries with a long tradition of short-term studies (Ireland and the UK) and, which is more surprising and shows strong differentiation between transition countries, from two post-communist Baltic states (Latvia and Lithuania), with the highest score in Ireland (82% agree), followed by Latvia (75%), the UK (70%) and Lithuania (66%). The strongest disbelief in the value of the bachelor degree in the labour market comes from academics in Italy, Hungary, Greece, Portugal, France, Slovakia, Austria and Estonia, where over 50% of academics disagree with the statement (51-57%).

In Central Europe, the majority of academics still do not believe in the value of the bachelor degree in the labour market in Hungary and Slovakia (but not in the Czech Republic, with 57% academics linking bachelor degrees with suitable jobs in the labour market). Poland is below the EU-27 average, with 42% of academics agreeing with the link (and 35% disagreeing with the link). It is interesting to note the difference in evaluating the usefulness of the bachelor degree to the labour market by academics between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as between Latvia and Lithuania on the one hand and Estonia on the other. The support of academics for the split between bachelor and master degrees also varies strongly among European countries. Poland is among those European countries in which academics are above the average in disagreeing with the statement: "The introduction of the three cycle system (the bachelor-master-doctorate) will improve (or has improved) the quality of education". In short, academics tend not believe in the success of this aspect of the Bologna process. Only in 8 countries (out of 31 studied) the disagreement is stronger than in Poland (38%): it is above 50% for Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary, two big Western European systems of Germany and Italy, the Netherlands and Austria.

Retrospectively, academics in Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia and Estonia agree also that it would have been better if the old one-tier system was kept, without a split between bachelor and master degrees (40-53%). In Poland, the majority of academics disagree with the statement, and about one third agrees with it (56% and 32%, respectively). Polish academics are almost evenly divided in their attitude to the statement that first cycle graduates (Bachelor) should follow a master program (46% agree, 48% disagree, with the strongest support of over 50% in such countries as Romania, three big Western European systems of Italy, France and Spain, Portugal, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, and Croatia). And the disbelief is expressed in European systems in which Bologna process is reported to be implemented on a massive scale.

Students in 31 surveyed European countries (according to recent Eurobarometer's study, *Students and Higher Education Reform*, EC 2007) are still attached to master programs even more than academics: three-quarters of students (75%) working towards a first cycle degree said they wanted to continue their studies. Only 18% of bachelor-level students surveyed would like to find work after graduation and never study again. Polish bachelor-level students are among those who most strongly prefer to continue studying for a second degree (75%). In Poland, the percentage of students who are planning to find work (or return to higher education later on) after graduation is the smallest in Europe (17% only, equal to Slovakia and Romania). In Poland, 75% of students want to continue studying for a second degree, 12% would like to find work and continue studies later on a part-time basis, and 5% would like to find work and never study again (EC 2009, 46). Poland is also one of the eight countries in which 99-100% of students give their support for the importance of providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the labour market, together with Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia as well as Belgium, Portugal and Finland (EC 2009, 16).

To sum up this brief statistical portrait of attitudes towards the bachelor degree in Europe: Polish students still seem not to believe in the value of bachelor degrees in the Polish labour market. They prefer to continue studying for a master degree rather than to find work. Additionally, they link very strongly higher education and employability (the link between higher education and employability is especially important in those post-communist transition countries which have strong private sector in higher education: Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, EC 2009, 41). As the study will show in further sections, strong disbelief of Polish students in the value of the bachelor degree can be contrasted with increasingly strong belief of the labour market in the degree, as viewed through the proxy of (very substantial) wage premium for higher education at the bachelor level. Also the disbelief of employers themselves (as shown by various national employers' surveys in the last decade) can be contrasted with data coming from recent labour market statistics. The bachelor degree is increasingly being accepted in practical terms, viewed through high remuneration levels compared with secondary education graduates. The Bologna process seems to have substantially increased the labour market position of graduates with the bachelor degree. Polish changes in degree structure which started in the beginning of the 1990s were reinforced by the Bologna process, and the social acceptance of the Bologna process was higher due to the presence of the two-tier structure of studies ten years before the process started. A historical note is needed here, to show the changes in more detail.

The bachelor degree in Poland from a historical perspective: legal changes and institutional transformations

The bachelor degree in Poland in social perceptions is still an inferior, professional (or vocational) degree; it is lower than the master

degree which, and still only which, reflects complete higher education credentials. These perceptions, apart from historical reasons, are first of all a legacy of introducing a new level of studies in the new Law on Higher Education of 1990, called “vocational” (*studia zawodowe*) at that time. The historical legacy requires an explanation, highly relevant to the social reluctance to accept the bachelor degree as a higher education degree, and consequently to the social reluctance to accept the Bologna process with its emphasis on two-tier structure of studies. The general social perception does not equal labour market perceptions anymore, though: the bachelor degree seems to be, finally, welcome by the employers, as recent (2009) national data on salaries and wages confirm – via a relatively high wage premium for higher education for bachelor degree holders.

For this current negative social perception of the bachelor degree, and for the development of vocational education at the tertiary level, of crucial importance was article 4 section 2 of the 1990 Law on Higher Education which stated that “higher education institutions may provide unitary master degree studies, *higher vocational studies*, and supplementary master degree studies” (emphasis mine). This article formed the legal basis for higher education institutions, both public and private, to provide various forms of vocational (defined as lower-level, not as “professional”; defined by the level of studies rather than the areas of studies, either more academic or more professional) studies at the tertiary level. The formulation was especially important for the expansion of private higher education institutions, the vast majority of which were not able to meet the academic criteria required by the Ministry of Education to offer master-level study programs. The expansion of the private sector was thus made possible by the introduction in the 1990 law of the above concept of “higher vocational studies”, lasting 3 years instead of 5 years (as it was traditional for “higher education” in Poland), and leading to the vocational degree of *licencjat*

or *inżynier* (bachelor), rather than to the academic degree of *magister* (master). What in Poland in 1990 made possible the expansion of the higher education system, later on became a crucial distinction between bachelor and master programs in European higher education systems in the 2000s (together with the spread of the Bologna process). But the social purpose for which first-cycle studies were introduced in Poland in 1990 still influences its relatively low social recognition. In the Polish context, vocational higher education meant the same study areas as in academic higher education but undertaken only at the first-cycle level.

The 1990 Law introduced wide institutional autonomy in both the organization of studies and the shape of study programs offered. Three-year's long vocational programs, offered in both public and private sectors, were not exactly vocational (or professional): they could be more vocational and practice-related or more academic in their focus. They could also be just as academic as study programs of first three years of studies offered in five-year unitary master programs. Only as few as 10 percent of private higher education institutions were licensed to offer master programs in the beginning in the mid-1990s; the rest of them offered bachelor programs which, no matter what their content was, no matter how academic they were, were actually termed (by the law) "vocational". The 2001 amendment to the 1990 Law on Higher Education opened the way for those private vocational institutions which were meeting the criteria to offer master programs to transform themselves into institutions regulated by the Law on Higher Education. The 2002 amendment (27th July) to the 1990 Law introduced the possibility for all higher education institutions, including vocational higher education institutions, to offer studies either in the "study areas" (which was not possible for vocational institutions until then) or in "vocational study areas and specializations". In this way, the only distinction between vocational programs and academic programs was lifted: first-cycle studies both in academic

institutions and in vocational institutions could be basically the same. There was no legal need to provide vocational education in (still legally called) vocational institutions. Finally, the 2005 Law, following the requirements of the Bologna process, introduced the concept of “first-cycle studies” instead of hitherto existing since 1990 lower-level “vocational studies”, which brought about further changes. A new division of higher education institutions was introduced: *academic* institutions (those providing three cycles of studies) and *vocational* institutions (those providing two first cycles of studies only), with a negative definition of vocational institutions as those “not having the right to confer doctoral degrees”, that is, not entitled to provide the third-level studies.

Consequently, since 2005, the major legal difference between academic and vocational sector in higher education has been based not on the type of studies offered (either academic or vocational) but on the academic rights possessed by higher education institutions (the only difference being between those having and those not having the right to confer doctoral degrees). The differences between vocational and academic sectors were therefore blurred further.

The degree structure and the labour market response: review of recent evidence

Both higher education and labour market have been under powerful pressures to change, both following the collapse of communism in 1989 and following joining the European Union in 2004. Social perceptions of the bachelor degree need to be contrasted with empirical evidence about its role drawn from labour market statistics. Surprisingly, still largely negative social perceptions of the bachelor degree can be contrasted with already largely positive response of the labour market to it, especially in private sector. Labour force

in Poland in the last decade, following immense growth of higher education sector, has been increasingly better educated. The share of economically active population with higher education credentials has been substantially increasing; it has increased from 2.58 million (2003) to 4.31 million (2009), or from 15.35% to almost one quarter (24.7%) of economically active population. Poland has been rapidly catching up with the OECD average. Higher education credentials, as in other EU economies, are closely linked to employment and unemployment levels: in 2009, as in previous years, the relationship was clear – the higher education levels, the lower chances for unemployment (2.6% for higher education, 11.3% for secondary education and 14.3% for primary education, all data here and in subsequent paragraphs from GUS 2009). The success of the Bologna process in Poland hinges on the success of the two-tier system of studies promoted by it: if the bachelor degree is found acceptable by employers, as it seems to be the case today, the two-tier system of studies may find more social acceptance. Recent empirical evidence tends to indicate that the bachelor degree has become a strong pillar of the labour market, especially in the private sector which provides about 70% of all employees in the national economy.

The well-educated segment is the only segment of Polish workforce which is increasing substantially (by 1.8 million, or 67% in 2003-2009), with the segment with general secondary education increasing only slightly in the same period (by 20%) and all other segments decreasing. Still, the share of workforce with (combined) basic vocational and lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary education is considerable – almost 40% (39% or 6.8 million, 2009). For both basic vocational and lower secondary education, there were decreases in 2003-2009 (from 5.77 million to 5.2 million, and from 2.21 million to 1.6 million, respectively). Compared with major UE economies, Poland's education gap has been substantially decreasing in the last decade, owing to high level of

enrolments in higher education. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of students each year was approximately 1.58-1.95 million, and the number of graduates – about 300-400 thousand each year. While the overall level of education of the Polish population as a whole is rising steadily but is still considerably lower than the OECD average, the overall level of education of economically active population is rising considerably faster. Earlier generations with – on average – lower levels of education are leaving the labour market reaching the (lower than in major OECD economies, on average) retirement age. The domination of (combined) labour force with basic vocational and lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary education is still considerable – but much smaller than ten years ago. Every year about 400 thousand graduates from higher education enter the labour market which gradually changes the composition of the labour force. The number of higher education graduates is not expected to be higher per year, as the number of students is not expected to be higher – and in the next decade, it will be declining every year, with the lowest level, as demographic projections show, in 2025 (Kwiek 2012b).

The education level of the Polish workforce is also closely related to ownership, or the sector of employment: a public sector, which is twice as small as a private sector (about 4 million employees, as opposed to about 8 million employees in the private sector), has 30% more employees with higher education credentials. Only one-third of professionals are in the private sector employment (33%); the rest of professionals are in the public sector (about half of whom are in public education and public healthcare, 749 thousand in the former and 284 thousand in the latter sector). What it means in practical terms is that 46% of public sector employees have higher education credentials (1.94 million out of 4.23 million), as opposed to 19% of private sector employees (only 1.58 million out of 8.13 million, 2009).

It may mean that, effectively, education levels in the public sector can be increasing only slowly, while education levels in the private sector are much more open for further increases. The practical consequences for higher education could be that the need for higher enrolment levels is greater for those study areas which do not lead to public sector jobs (for instance, there is no need for further increases in the number of students in such study areas as teaching and related, or the humanities and related). Exactly the opposite is occurring, though, as seen through a pattern of enrolments in the last decade by fields of study.

Focusing on a particular dimension of the Bologna process in Poland, we want to contrast here generally negative social perceptions of the bachelor degree of both students, academics and the society at large (as viewed through various national and international surveys, especially of students and academics) – with an increasingly positive attitude of the Polish labour market in general, as viewed through recent national data on the wage premium for higher education. Wage premium for higher education needs to be viewed in the context of the employment structure, by occupation group, and by sector of employment. The biggest occupation group in the Polish labour force (2010) is that of professionals (2.007 million), followed by craft and related trade workers (1.751 million) and technicians and associate professionals (1.199 million). The employment structure by sector of employment shows that two-third of professionals work in the public sector (and only 683.9 thousand in the private sector), and this is the only occupation group in which the share of employees in the public sector is bigger than in the private sector. All the remaining 8 major OECD occupation groups are dominated by private sector employment.

On the one hand, transformations towards a better-educated workforce are confirmed by the increasing share of employees with higher education in the labour force. On the other hand, transformations are confirmed by increasing number of professionals in the

labour force. The process of transformations is confirmed by newly created jobs. For instance, the number of professionals in 2008 was increasing (to 2.031 million, end of the year) and the number of workers was decreasing (from 1.791 million to 1.686 million, end of 2008). While, in the first quarter of 2008, job creation for professionals was smaller than job creation for workers, in the fourth quarter of 2008, there were more new jobs available for professionals than for workers. The trend has been continuing in 2009 and 2010, as data from the Central Statistical Office (GUS) show. The sharp increase in the last six years in the share of economically active population with higher education occurred with still high (2009) wage premium for higher education, both bachelor's and master's level, seen also by the proxy of average gross salary or average gross per-hour pay. The structure of the economically active population by sectors of employment and level of education is the following: masters-level higher education is dominant in the public sector, while bachelor's-level higher education dominates in the private sector. Bachelor's level education seems to be much more easily recognized in the private sector – while in the public sector still traditional view of complete higher education as master-level education prevails.

The wage premium for higher education is especially high for men in the private sector (199% and 162%, master's and bachelor's level), and especially low for women in the public sector (117% and 100%) – which reflects somehow the dominating gender structure of economically active population combined with levels of education. There seems to be no “credential inflation” (Collins 1979), no “diploma disease” (Dore 1976) and no signs of “over-education” (Freeman 1976) in Poland at the moment, the specters of which have been haunting higher education since the 1970s. This is shown by both salaries and per hour payments. There is also strong “seniority” in salaries and wages which needs to be stressed: the real difference in average salary comes with the age – most

strikingly in the 55-59 and 60-64 age brackets, in both public and private sectors. This may mean that the wage premium for higher education may be available mostly for older workers and not for younger, so it does not have to be available immediately after graduation. Precise differences in wages between recent bachelor and master graduates could only be shown through various types of large-scale graduate surveys which are still relatively rare in Europe and so far has been mostly academics-driven (Teichler 2011; see also a comprehensive conceptual framework to study higher education and work in Brennan, Kogan and Teichler 1996, 1-24, and links between higher education “and the world of work” in Teichler 2009). A recent report on Poland (Grotkowska 2011, 225) does not focus on income differentials of graduates but still indicates that the income of bachelor graduates is only slightly lower than that of masters (according to the 2007 survey of about 20,000 graduates she refers to, the net hourly wage differential is only 7%). What the report shows and what cannot be shown through labour market statistics is the lower quality of work for recent bachelor graduates: they more often work on shifts (36% as opposed to 27% among master graduates, much more often work at night (18% and 12%, respectively), during the weekends (58% and 44%, respectively, Grotkowska 2011, 225; another recent study based on about 20,250 face-to-face interviews conducted within the Polish School Leavers Survey of 2007 shows the differentiation of labour market outcomes among graduates within higher education, especially between masters graduates and others, Baranowska 2011, 239). The Polish data are not strikingly different from other European countries surveyed as the picture is far from homogeneous: the bachelor graduates in France and Hungary earn about 30% less while in Italy and the Netherlands they earn as much or even more on average than masters graduates (Schomburg 2011, 269). One more dimension missing from the general picture shown here (as well as from European graduate surveys in general) is a sub-

stantial differentiation in graduate incomes across fields of studies. One future research direction is linking higher education with labour market trajectories through academic fields of study, with additional lifetime earnings different for different academic degrees viewed horizontally rather than vertically. The difference between following labour market trajectories by educational levels and by fields of study within the same educational level (e.g. at the bachelors and masters levels in different fields of study) is significant. The national average wage premium for higher education, or private internal rate of return (IRR) in higher education, or other related indicators measured over the years by the OECD, do not show the difference between fields of studies. So far, this dimension has not been systematically explored, mostly due to the lack of European data in a comparable format. And average additional lifetime earnings are substantially different for different degrees, as various national or global labour market studies show (e.g. PricewaterhouseCoopers global study on salaries related to fields of studies from 2007). While overall average additional lifetime earnings seem substantial in most countries, it is very low or almost zero for graduates in such fields of study as arts or humanities in many systems.

Researching labour market consequences of studying different fields seems fundamental to linking higher education to the labour market successes and failures (changing employment status and changing occupational status over time) both in individual EU member states and in Europe. The research literature analyzing the impact of the specific field of study (and its importance for social stratification studies) on occupational prestige, job mismatches, employment status and income is growing (see Reimer, Noelke 2008, 234). As they argue, “with increasing numbers of university graduates in the labour market, the signal value of a university degree from less-academically challenging and less selective fields like the humanities and social sciences will deteriorate”.

This is an important additional dimension of studies linking higher education to labour markets and labour market trajectories, and levels of educational attainment by field of study with wage premium for higher education by field of study (see ideas developed recently by Bernardi and Ballarino 2010). What is striking, and goes against conventional knowledge of the economic benefits from higher education in Poland, is that bachelors-level higher education seems to be already well recognized in the labour market, and well rewarded by the labour market, leading to 133.9% of salaries for bachelor degree holders generally, and to 149.3% in case of males. Which is in line with the traditional human capital theory according to which the relationship between earnings and schooling is “simple to state: more educated people enjoy a higher level of earnings than people with a lower level of education. However, people with the same level of education do have different earnings depending on their race, gender, ethnicity, ability, and social background” (Cipollone 1995, 145). The economic benefit for men with the bachelor degree is higher (149.3%) than the economic benefit for women with the master degree (135%, GUS 2009). Men are much higher rewarded for their higher education, regardless of the type (bachelor or master) – by 25-30 percentage points. The wage premium for higher education is also strongly related to the sector of employment: in the public sector, it is substantially lower than in the private sector of employment. While in the public sector for the master degree it is 121.2% for men and 117% for women, in the private sector it is almost 200% (199.1%) for men and almost 170% (169.4%) for women. The difference between rewards given to higher education in both sectors are related to the type of occupations prevalent in both sectors: the public sector in 47% consists of professionals, mostly in (public) education and health sectors in which higher education is much more a standard requirement – than an advantage.

This tendency is strongly confirmed by bachelor-level employees in the public sector – for women there is no reward (100%), while for men and women combined it is only 105.3%. The expectation about educational levels of employees (professionals) in the public sector is the master degree, and the bachelor degree is not viewed as an advantage, and is not financially rewarded accordingly. Higher education is rewarded much higher in the private sector: both master and bachelor levels, both men and women. Women with the bachelor degree in the private sector are higher rewarded for their education (139.6%) than men with the master degree in the public sector (121.2%). Overall, the differences between the two sectors are striking, and the recognition of higher education in both forms is very high: the master degree 182.2% (199.1% men and 169.4 women), and the bachelor degree 151.5% (162.1% men and 139.6% women).

Returns to higher education in Poland are very high; studying is still very much financially rewarded, and working with higher education credentials in the private sector is rewarded unexpectedly high. Standard OECD statistics does not make a distinction between returns to higher education at master's and bachelor's level. But generally returns in Poland are among highest in the OECD area (no matter which OECD methodology is used). As the OECD context section about the earning premium from education points out: "high and rising premiums can indicate that more highly educated individuals are in short supply; the opposite is true for low and falling premiums. Relative earnings, trend data and the earnings premium in particular, are thus important indicators of the match between the education system and the labour market" (OECD 2011, 138). We have not discussed the social origin of bachelor and masters graduates in the present study but, as in other Central and Eastern European economies, young people originating from lower socio-economic strata tend to choose bachelor's level studies, with a stronger market orientation, in less demanding aca-

demic fields, as pointed out in a recent large-scale comparative study on education and labour market entry in the region (Kogan et al. 2011, 336). Poland had one of the highest wage premium for higher education in general in the 2000s in Europe (together with Hungary). With a new methodology of private internal rates of return (IRR) used by OECD recently, Poland still ranked very high among OECD economies for rewards from higher education: for males, it is the third best (22.8), following the Czech Republic (the first, with 29.1) and Portugal (23.9). Hungary is fourth, with 19.8. In largest higher education systems, IRRs are below 10 (Germany, France, Spain), with higher levels for the UK (14.3) and the US (11) (OECD 2008, 196). And with still another methodology (private NPV – net present value) OECD used in 2009, Poland was relatively high on the list of OECD economies as well: it was 5th (with the level of 147,000 USD PPP), following only Portugal, Italy, the USA and the Czech Republic, and it was 80% more than the average for the 21 economies studied (OECD 2009). Unfortunately, international comparative data for OECD countries do not seem to make a difference between the bachelor and master degrees (which is standard data for e.g. USA).

Polish empirical studies used to show until recently that wage premium for higher education for holders of bachelor degrees is close to insignificant, compared with holders of post-secondary education (holders of *Matura* final exams, for instance UNDP on Poland, 2007, 175ff). But most recent national data show, perhaps for the first time so clearly, that wage premium for higher education for holders of bachelor (and equivalent, e.g. engineer) degrees are also substantial, especially for men (for PhD and master degrees, the relationship to the average salary was 141.4% (160% for men and 135% for women), for higher education with bachelor (and engineer) degrees, the relationship was also high – 133.9% (149.3% for men and 119% for women; for post-secondary education, the relationship is 90.2% (91.4% for men and 96% for

women). For secondary vocational education, the relationship is 74.7% (75.8 for men and only 62.2% for women) (GUS 2009, 64). Thus employment structure statistics and labour force statistics show that (higher) education is still highly valued in the labour market and is still highly rewarded in terms of remuneration. There seems to be no recent data available about the employers' perception of the bachelor degree (in the way that such data are easily available, and internationally comparable, with regard to students' and academics' perceptions reviewed above). But perhaps a good proxy of the labour market perception is wage premium for holders of bachelor degrees – which is quite high right now. (One general reservation needs to be made, though, following the above statistical data: “learning” does not have to be “earning”; as Lauder et al. (2012, 60) stress from the perspective of what they term The Global Auction Model, “however, a graduate premium on its own tells us nothing about the demand for graduate workers in relation to concepts of the knowledge economy or of technology. It may well be that the premium is created by a decline in the wages of non-graduate labour, if graduates were then being employed to undertake work previously done by non-graduates”. In the present section, we are considering the dynamics of bachelor and masters graduates earnings, and focus on the high rewards from the bachelor degree compared with the master degree – rather than on incomes and wages in general. On the most recent statement of the model, see a book on “the broken promises of education, jobs, and income”, Brown et al. 2011, 1-28, 113-146, and on credentials, jobs and income as increasingly “positional goods” and on education as a “signaling device”, see Hirsch 1976, Spence 1974, Collins 1974 and Blaug 1987. In empirical terms, though, the relationships between schooling and income are the same in both the human capital interpretation of education and the signaling or screening interpretation of education (as Tachibanaki 1995, 152 stressed almost two decades ago, “it is nearly impossible to identify which interpreta-

tion is more appropriate to explain empirical evidence of the relationship between education and earnings”. Also, what is troubling in the context of the human capital theory is the growing income inequality across OECD nations, or a distribution of wages across individuals which does not seem to be fully determined by the distribution of human capital, see OECD 2012 and Blair 2011, 65). The increasing acceptance of the bachelor degree in the Polish labour market seems to be an indirect product of Bologna process developments: in the 1990s the bachelor degree both had low social prestige and was refused as appropriate higher education credentials by the labour market. But recent national data tend to suggest that while the social prestige of the bachelor degree is still low, its market value is quite high, including for recent bachelor graduates. Consequently, the bachelor degree may have higher acceptance among students and graduates in the near future. The role of the Bologna process in these transformations has been substantial. There seems to be a combination of national and international forces at work which has managed to transform the national labour market position of the bachelor degree.

The bachelor degree and private higher education

Polish specificity in higher education relevant for the analysis of the bachelor/master split within Bologna process developments is that Poland has the biggest private higher education sector in Europe, with highest (34% in 2010) enrolments. By OECD definitions, Polish private sector is “independent private sector”, with income from public subsidies lower than 50% and with no publicly-funded employees. In 2009, private higher education sector had 633.100 students, 80% of them in first-cycle studies only and 82.6% of them as part-time students, and thus only about 17% as full-time students (GUS 2010, 57). The social consequences of

such a composition of the student body in Poland for the perception of the bachelor degree are far-reaching: in the last 15 years, there were more than 1 million graduates with bachelor degrees from the (generally) low-prestige private higher education institutions. But then, in 2000s, the Bologna process came to Poland, with its pressures on two-tier structure of studies – which has reinvigorated Polish lower-level degree. Low social prestige (and low social legitimacy, see Slantcheva and Levy 2007 on Central Europe) of private higher education institutions in general is having a powerful impact on the low social prestige of current and future bachelor degree holders (and first-cycle studies) in general. Low social recognition (as testified by a large proportion of students, by European standards, wishing to continue studies at the master's level) can be contrasted with recent data drawn from the labour market statistics which indicate significant wage premium for bachelor degree holders, as discussed above. Consequently, students in Poland both plan to continue study at the master's level (highest score in Europe, EC 2009) and do undertake master's level studies, most often, in the case of private sector graduates – continue in the fee-based public sector master's programs. They do continue their studies, though, perhaps without the awareness that the labour market is already recognizing bachelor degree and rewarding its holders with substantially higher salaries/wages compared with those of secondary education graduates.

The current social attitude to bachelor-level studies promoted throughout the 2000s by the Bologna process is still determined by their initial appearance in Poland in 1991 as vocational (that is, lower-level in the Polish legal context) studies in the new private sector, seeking social recognition and social legitimacy itself. Bachelor studies for many years, until Bologna process ideas were implemented in the 2000s, were regarded as academically inferior, and provided by emergent and (largely viewed as) academically inferior private sector. Public higher education institutions, espe-

cially universities, had negative attitudes towards bachelor level of studies for strongly cultural reasons: they offered full five-years-long master studies, in contrast to less prestigious private sector institutions which in the 1990s were legally allowed, in their vast majority, to offer only bachelor studies. Polish public higher education institutions, especially most prestigious universities, were very reluctant in introducing bachelor degrees, and in reforming their study programs into separate bachelor and master sections. The Law on Higher Education of 2005 finally forced all higher education institutions to introduce separate study paths for both degrees (if both are offered) by 2008. The new law of 2011 merely confirmed the clear separation between study levels and introduced a learning outcomes perspective in defining study programs.

Conclusions

The promotion of first-cycle studies in Poland seems of primal importance for several interrelated reasons: the structure of the student population in which the vast majority of students chooses to continue studies at the master level, without trying to enter the labour market, is ineffective and costly to the state budget (in the case of full-time students in the public sector), as well as costly to those students who study in fee-based tracks in the public sector or in fee-based private sector. High economic returns to higher education, expressed in high wage premium for higher education for holders of both bachelor and master degrees, may indicate that Polish labour market is already recognizing the value of skills and competences achieved during first-cycle studies. Possibly, bachelor studies, still not fully recognized in social perceptions, are beginning to be recognized by the labour market, that is recognized in purely economic terms. New strategies for the development of Polish higher education until 2020 produced in 2010 do not develop

this theme, though: there seems to be no interest in overall shortening of study periods in Poland at the moment among any of major stakeholders – government, universities, students, and parents. The future of Polish universities depends heavily on the future implementation the emergent Polish Lifelong Learning Strategy and National Quality Frameworks (related to European Qualifications Framework), so far substantially delayed. The consolidation of all skills and competences, from all levels and forms of education, into a readable and easily recognizable system is a major challenge for the future, of which the bachelor/master degree distinction is only a part today. First cycle studies may be popularized, especially in view of the economic evidence coming from the labour market, while second cycle studies may be made more selective, and possibly funded through tuition fees. The major lesson from the study is that there are periods in social and economic transformations in which social perceptions of educational credentials do not keep up with purely economic perceptions of them. While society (including students themselves) seems, by and large, to still disregard first-level higher education in Poland, the economy already seems to be greeting first-degree holders in the labour market. This extremely positive transformation may be viewed as a perfect illustration of Bologna process success stories in Poland.

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The Bologna Process in Romania

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The study¹ conceptualizes the Bologna process, primarily as a political process, rather than a simple structural and technical-administrative issue. We argue for the necessity of multi-actor, multilevel and multidimensional perspective in the analysis of higher education policy developments, with special regard to the Bologna-reforms. From a wider and political perspective the Bologna process in Romania proved to be an euphemism, which gives a political platform to and covers various reform ambitions: national and supranational, and ideologically neoliberal, new-managerialist change initiatives. We strive to present the various reform visions, debates and ideas emerging under Bologna process. Firstly, there will be characterized the Romanian higher education system, and the higher education trends and challenges (e.g. expansion of the system, the evolving tensions and problems) faced by the policy actors after the political transformation. Secondly, in a chronological and thematic arrangement the Romanian Bologna process, where several aspects of macro- and micro-implementation will be outlined.

Conceptualizing the reform as a top-down process

The Bologna process in Romania became a highly normative and ideological concept on higher education change. The change is conceptualized from above, with limited policy influence of local actors, though this model of planning and implementation of Bologna-reforms is general in Europe. The most visible features of the

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Bologna process in Romania are the governmental initiatives, decisions and legal aspects, in general, the activities and participation of political-administrative level in this process. As the Bologna process in Romania lives in laws and regulations concerning higher education, than the tempting perspective for an analyst is that of linear, rational, top-down approach, where the national governments and international actors are the most important and visible players. In this perspective any divergence from the politically and professionally constructed so called “Bologna-objectives” in national and international arena is conceptualized as the “deficit” or “failure” of implementation, deviation from and misunderstandings of the clear goals, defense of various *status quo*-s etc. In this perspective the legitimate standing-point is rooted to that proposed by the political and bureaucratic actors, and national and international expert groups or networks. The competing and alternative policy ideas and perspectives hardly get any public attention. The official policy ideas and enthusiasm dominate the scene, though, if an analyst takes a closer look to the Romanian Bologna micro-implementations, than will get a more complex picture on reform potentials at institutional and faculty levels.

However, the most effective conceptualization of Bologna-generated change remains that of from above (top-down), even if we have some sporadic, small-scale inputs (e.g. institutional case studies, thematic analysis on various aspects of Bologna) from various researches or everyday experience on this complex picture. The data sources concerning Bologna process in Romania are limited mainly to political-administrative level or that point of view. For example there is an abundance of official reports, policy proposals, action plans, the outcomes of political decision-making (laws and regulations) and a few governmental expert papers etc., whilst we barely get scholarly attempts on catching the Romanian policy developments under the Bologna-umbrella. Indeed, even several academic papers are elaborated in a genre of official report

following an administrative logic and normative language, and discussing the actual state of decisions, the political ambitions and policy outcomes of the central government and puffer organizations. In these papers we can follow the higher education change from technical and administrative point of view (e.g. which laws and orders were published, what number of programs were authorized under the new structure, how many credits represent the first cycle etc.). This gives the comforting sense for top actors of advancing the process. However, the analyst with academic perspective remains unsatisfied, since in its focus is not (only) the policy-maker, but the social-political phenomena. Additionally, these information sources and their characteristics involve epistemological and methodological traps for a researcher, since it creates the misleading impression that the transformations affects the institutions and programs at a similar degree and intensity as the political-administrative level. It is difficult to assess if the changes are essential or only formal (technical-administrative). Probably, these questions will become answerable only after two decades of transformations.

In our analysis we conceptualize the Bologna process, as a political process. The rationales for such conceptualization are of two types. In one hand, was and remain an initiative of the top (inter-governmental policy initiative), and renationalized by the governments and localized by the institutions and programs. In other hand the most of available data sources could be originated to the political-administrative level and puffer organizations. This limits the focus of the study, mainly to the macro-implementation and renationalization process of Bologna-objectives, where the local (institutional and program) perspectives are hardly present.

The transformation of Romanian higher education system after 1989

The Romanian higher education system has been developed from dual to a binary system onto the '90. After the Second World War the higher education experienced a spectacular grow of new institutions, which resulted in the emergence of a dual arrangement. However, this expansion was interrupted by the Communist regime, which continuously – in several waves – tried to decrease the number of institutions and limit the enrolment rates (e.g. close downs, institutional integrations). There were numerous local initiatives, which seek to establish institutions in underdeveloped regions and cities, however, with limited success.

Table 1: The number of higher education institutions (1938–1990)

1938	1950	1965	1975	1990
16	54	47	42 (7 universities)	43 (11 universities)

Source: Chitoran 1992, 597.

The institutional network was formed by the smaller university and larger non-university sector. The latest consists of polytechnics, and specialized higher learning institutes and academies, which offered professional, vocational, practice-oriented and a few short-cycle programs, as an alternative to long university studies. In this period several specialties (e.g. nursing, primary and lower secondary teacher education) were still offered in post-secondary level (several of them subsequently were upgraded). The polytechnics have had narrow portfolios, but the enrolment rates were larger than in universities. The non-university sector was highly specialized and fragmented. For example the most of independent institutions had very narrow portfolio with one or two programs (e.g. medicine, agriculture, architecture etc.). The existing eleven universities concentrated on traditional areas, as natural science, humanities, law and economics. According to their function they were

mainly teaching-oriented institutions, since the research has been carried on independent institutes, and only after the political transformation was replaced to the universities. Behind the older universities there were established in the '60s three universities, with the academic upgrading of specialized institutions. In addition, after the political transformation has been initiated again a larger vertical integration, when not only institutions, but programs were upgraded. Although, the original culture, identity and profile of these specialized institutions remain for a long time determining. (Chitoran 1992)

The quality control was realized through the admissions, which in spite of the dominant ideology favoured the elites of the time and remain highly selective. The elitist character of Romanian higher education, the impeding of expansion and limiting of enrolments was almost without precedent in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, when in Hungary on 100,000 inhabitants were 921 students, in Romania this number was only 694 in 1985. At the time, this is the lowest in Europe. The other considerable difference is in the size of the institutional network, for example, in 1990 the Romanian higher education included 43 institutions, and whilst this number in the smaller Hungary was 57 (the institutional size does not compensate the difference). After the political turn the openness has increased considerably due to the social pressure on enlarging the institutional system.

The study period in the first stage varied between 3-6 years and led to two different type of degree (the engineering diploma and the higher education diploma). The studies leading to the university degree lasted 4-6 years and leads to licentiate (*diplomă de licență*) equivalent to Master in Arts degree. (Chitoran 1992) The main priority in higher education policy after the 1989/90 political transformation was the elimination of high political-ideological control over education in general and more concretely in curricula, the restitution of institutional autonomy, the reform of state-higher educa-

tion relationship, the creation of new legal frameworks, marketization and privatization, and the raising of enrolments. The accreditation as a new control mechanism was introduced in the beginning of the decade. In addition, it started the experimentation with the credit system in a consortium between four universities. This attempt covers various institutional and program practices on credits, but uniform system was not developed. These priorities led to comprehensive reform ambitions in higher education, which embrace all the important areas (institutional arrangement, sectoral governance and financing, training structure and curricular issues, faculty and staff etc.).

With regard to the higher education governance the periods of hesitating decentralization and certain re-centralization follow each other. There would be necessary to mention that the decentralization of higher education and institutional autonomy existed mainly as ambitions and principles of a political minority and in policy suggestions of the international organizations. The appealed institutional autonomy remains largely a wish dream, only the disciplines, the chairs and professors recover some autonomy and freedom.

An additional characteristic of Romanian central educational governance (the Ministry of Education) is the exceptional instability. The central administrative control is changing almost in every year; indeed, there existed even ministries of a few months. Despite the short-living educational political and administrative power, almost every minister is planning universal reforms and new acts on education. Under these unstable circumstances the working strategy for educational transformation is the incremental, small-step and small-scale changes through decrees. In addition, we need to note that the central political (parliamentary) power, the bargaining, lobbying and background agreements have a high importance in Romanian educational policy-making. The political struggles between various interest groups and the central political power are of higher significance in ultimate policy outcomes, than the profes-

sional and expert influence on policies, as compared to other – only seemingly similar – countries of the region (e.g. Hungary, Czech Republic). This rule of the game is stable and well-known between the players, thus at some extent counterbalance the limited potentials of ministerial control of education. In sum, the political power relations overwrite the professional policy-making.

The retention of the educational expansion in the Communist period after the transformation resulted in an explosion of learning ambitions. Thus the Romanian higher education rapidly starts to catch up in regard to the enlargement of institutional network and enrolment rates, but this process have been not followed by similar measures in increasing of staff numbers and improving of infrastructure. The participation rates were multiplied (quadrupled) in the first decade of the transformation (1989: 710, 2004: 2,860 to 100,000 inhabitants), while the faculty number only doubled in this period. The faculty/student number in the transition period has increased from 1/14 (1989) to 1/21 (2004). The participation rates of the given age group shows a significant improvement in openness of Romanian higher education: in the academic year of 1989/1990 the tertiary enrolment rate was 8,8% of the 18-22 age group (World Bank, 1998), whilst in 2008/2009 was 63,3% of 19-23 and above age group (Eurydice, 2009). These rates illustrates a remarkable opening and democratization, however, it would be interesting to show the social-economic composition of enrolled student groups according to institutional and program types.

One of the most important tools of the improvement in access was the liberalization of the founding of institutions (private providers). In one hand, this resulted from the higher education policy suggestions of World Bank Group, which was involved in and financed the reform, and in other hand due to the legal vacuum that entailed the repealing of the old law. In first years after transformation it is estimated the exis-

tence of 250 private higher education institutions², as a consequence of increased local demand for education.

Table 2: The number of students and faculties in Romanian higher education between 1989 and 2006

Academic year	Total		Public		Private	
	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty
1989/90	164,507	11,696	164,507	11,696	0	0
1990/91	192,810	13,927	192,810	13,927	11,054	no date
1991/92	215,226	17,315	215,226	17,615	34,801	no date
1992/93	235,669	18,123	235,669	18,123	85,000	7,180*
1993/94	250,087	19,130	250,087	no date	110,880	no date
1994/95	255,162	20,452	255,162	20,452	114,500	no date
1995/96	336,141	22,511	250,836	19,994	85,305	2,617
1996/97	354,488	23,477	261,054	19,897	93,434	3,580
1997/98	360,590	24,427	249,875	21,633	110,715	2,794
1998/99	407,720	26,013	277,666	22,955	130,054	3,058
1999/00	452,621	26,977	322,129	23,809	130,492	3,158
2000/01	533,152	27,959	382,478	24,686	150,674	3,273
2001/02	582,221	28,674	435,406	25,174	146,815	3,500
2002/03	596,297	29,619	457,259	26,029	139,038	3,590
2003/04	620,785	30,137	476,881	26,400	143,904	3,737
2005/06	716,464	31,543	513,678	26,881	202,786	4,662

* Estimated data.

Source: Sadlak 1994, 16; National Statistical Institute 2004; Eurydice 2007.

The continuous expansion of private, local institutions was stopped by the introduction of quality control mechanisms, and the beginning of formal accreditation and licensing. As a result the number of private institutions has been reduced radically. With regard to these higher education initiatives and processes we have only limited information, but we know that they were mainly small, highly specialized institutions with a few (1-3) short-cycle, vocational programs.

² In official statistics are mentioned only the licensed institutions.

Table 3: The institutional network of Romanian higher education

Academic year	Total		Public		Private	
	Institution	Faculty	Institution	Faculty	Institution	Faculty
1989/90	44	101	44	101	0	0
1990/91	48	186	48	186	17	no date
1991/92	56	257	56	257	30	187
1992/93	62	261	62	261	66	381
1993/94	63	262	63	262	66	381
1994/95	63	262	63	262	no date	no date
1995/96	95	437	59	318	36	119
1996/97	102	485	58	324	44	161
1997/98	106	516	57	342	49	174
1998/99	111	556	57	361	54	195
1999/00	121	632	58	411	63	220
2000/01	126	696	59	438	67	258
2001/02	126	729	57	465	69	264
2002/03	125	742	55	489	70	253
2003/04	122	754	55	513	67	241
2005/06	107	770	55	554	52	216

Source: Sadlak 1994, 16; The Yearbook of Romanian Statistical Institute, 2004; Eurydice, 2007.

The emergence of the private institutions was accompanied by various expectations. For example, the private higher education will democratize the education market, will be the real alternative to the public higher education, will adapt to the social and economical demands more flexible and rapidly, will function as the centre of innovations, in sum, with the expressions of Levy (1986) and Geiger (1986) they will offer “better”, “more” and “different” education. In contrary, it turned out soon that the pressure toward academic integration, low human and financial resources, and rigorous, homogenous administrative frameworks hinder the fulfilment of these expectations.

The public institutional network after the political transformation was formed by the same institutional and program types as

before (universities, institutes, academies, colleges). In public sector the diversification takes place mostly in the content and program structure, rather than in institutional types. Major transformations regarding the diversification happen in the private sector, where emerged new institutional types known mostly in Western higher education. In this diversification the religious and national minorities had a central role (e.g. in the establishment of Bible colleges, community colleges and regional colleges in the very beginning of the transition). After the appearance of the new higher education law (1995) the majority of institutions defined themselves as universities or other institutional types that grant university-level qualifications (collective institutional upward mobility). Thus formally the system became university-dominated, but if we examine the institutional configuration, the size and program-supply of these institutions it can be realized that the system is a mix of binary and university-dominated system.

In Romania, both the secondary and higher education was selective. After the political change and the rapid expansion of the system the selectivity of higher education step-by-step decreased. Thus the selection has been realized mostly by the secondary education, and still this is the practice: the secondary institution through *Baccalaureat* qualifies their students for the admission to higher education where at the entry point is no selection or only an arrangement based on previous study performance.

The transformation of the structure and moving toward a new three stage model – not identical to the Bologna-model – began in the first years of the post-communist transition, mostly with experimental nature at few universities. From 1993 practically in three cycles are organized the university studies in a very similar construction to the French-model. The model has been constructed with regard to the study time in the next way $4/3+1+3/4$. In the first stage, we found the studies that lead to university degree (*diploma de licență*) and the college degrees (*diplomă de absolvire*). In the

second stage, are placed the one year advanced studies (*diplomă de studii aprofundate*), the master degrees and other specialized further education programs, whilst in the third stage, were placed the post-gradual studies (the doctorate). The long-cycle study programs (from 4 to 6 year) dominates the scene, without internal structuration and more entry and exit points, whilst the non-university short-cycle program offering were larger, but not comparable with that of Bologna-style Bachelor in terms of curriculum, further education and labour market functions.

From a narrow structural and systemic perspective we can summarize the development of Romanian higher education as follows. The retention of learning opportunities during Communism led to rapid expansion of the system and an institutional boom after the transformation. This expansion was followed by a differentiation and diversification of functions, institutional and program types, curricular philosophies, institutional visions and profiles, and a growing heterogeneity of students and academic staff.

The process did followed similar paths and created parallel problems that the Western European systems faced long before. Gradually, the Romanian higher education system has developed from a dual to binary, and later to the mix of unified and university-dominated arrangement. The continuous rapid transformations and the various tensions and problems which emerged largely remain unsolved. The Bologna process has created a new political platform for the reconsideration and solving of the problems, which explains the enthusiasm of several actors regarding the potentials of the Bologna-reforms.

Joining the European higher education area

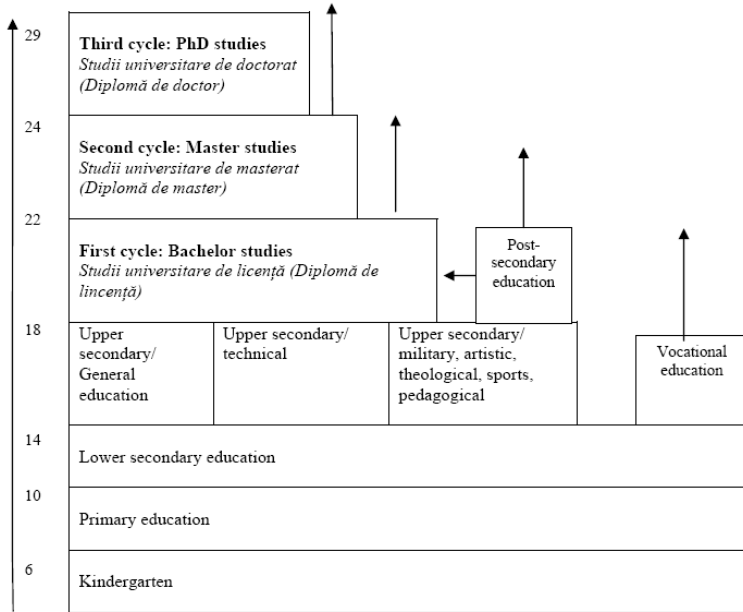
Short overview of the Romanian higher education system in the Bologna process

The Romanian higher education system is comprised by universities, university-level (institutes and academies) and post-university schools. In addition, between higher and secondary education stands the post-secondary education, which are organized by technical colleges of secondary level, lyceums and post-lyceums. These offer vocational, practice-oriented training (for example in health, accounting and economic studies), mostly for the occupation of lower level jobs in public services.

However, with the changing of occupational structure and educational system the status of these post-secondary institutions turn out to be unstable. Traditionally, the teacher education is arranged according to the level of education, where the pre-primary and primary-school teachers in pedagogical high schools, the lower secondary teachers in short-term higher education courses, and finally, the upper secondary teachers in long-term higher education programs are prepared, but in this area we also can register the gradual upward mobility all levels to higher education.

According to the Bologna action lines the long-cycle university studies were divided into two different cycles (Bachelor and Master). The entry condition for the Bachelor studies is the secondary school-leaving certificate (*bacalaureat*). The Bachelor and Master studies in the first-period of implementation remain uniform, which qualifies the diploma holders for the entry to the labour market and for further education.

Figure 1: The Overview of Romanian Educational System



Agenda, actors and policies

Romania was among the first countries joining the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 1999. During this period Andrei Marga, also known as the “European” and “the great reformer” stand at the head of the Ministry of Education. The period is often labelled as the harmonization and catching up of the Romanian higher education with European and international education policy trends. Under the Marga’s ministership and in a period of rapid expansion the higher education becomes a central policy issue; previously it was a peripheral theme compared to public education. As a response to various internal and external policy challenges he

promotes a comprehensive reform of the educational system. However, despite the supporting political climate only a few reform elements were able to muddle through the central decision-making and the local implementation. The aim of the comprehensive reform strategy is the complete elimination of the communist heritage and the Europeanization of Romanian higher education. The minister made several efforts to harmonize the Romanian higher education policy with the international and European reform policies. He is supported in the educational policy borrowing by learning and teaching experiences in Germany and the US. In addition, the first decade of higher educational transformation was supported financially and professionally by the international organizations (especially the World Bank Group), since Romania in this period does not have economic and financial resources to expand the institutional network in order to respond to the higher learning boom. The international organizations, consequently, left their markers on higher education system (e.g. large private sector, further strengthening of vocationally and practice-oriented programs etc.)

The central principle and constantly recurring theme of the Marga's higher education policy is the institutional autonomy and decentralization. In these policy visions and priorities the Humboldtian university concept is renewed. The international organizations – especially the World Bank Group – offer again education policy suggestions and loans for Marga's comprehensive reform, which primary objective it is to change (1) governance and funding of higher education, (2) the management of institutions, (3) to improve research and innovation at universities, (4) to promote cooperation between universities, society and economy, (5) to adopt new educational methods, and (6) to implement clear criteria in academic evaluation. With regard to the state-higher education relationship and financial issues the policy proposals of the World Bank has promoted the privatization and marketization of the

higher education and the introduction of the performance-based funding in various areas (e.g. income of academics, institutional funding). The overall aim was to increase and diversify the resources, to attract private resources, to enlarge the tuition fees, and to raise the ratio of private higher education providers in the system. The reform is started within the ministry: Marga strived to reduce the central political control over higher education and to arrange a new power division with the higher education institutions and buffer organizations. However, with limited success regarding the reduction of political control and increasing of professional (e.g. expert groups, professional corporations) influence on policy content. (see Marga 2001, 2006).

The common experience of the Napoleonic educational system is that all reform initiatives are implemented from top-down, in a legalistic manner: the change evolves in central policy content and rhetoric, and in laws and regulations. Cerych (1995) notes regarding the Central and Eastern European countries that may exist only what is legalized by law or based on law. In this political-administrative context are conceptualized the Bologna-reforms. The signing of the Bologna Declaration occurred in the period of Marga's ministry. Shortly after this political act the ministry begins to work on creating the legal framework for the implementation of two-cycle structure and the moving toward an internationally more comparable and transparent linear structure. At the start of structural transformation, there was issued two regulations. One of the regulations was concerned with the starting of Master programs, whilst the other was aimed the internationalization of the Romanian higher education, by launching foreign language programs.

The implementation of two-cycle structure was and remains a formal-technical act: (1) the reducing of study time at first stage to 3 year of Bachelors, (2) the internal structuration of traditional long-cycle programs, and (3) the starting of Masters in system-wide perspective. As in other countries, the two- or three-cycle structure

did not follow the standardized model (e.g. 4+1, 3, 5+1, 5) in the first phase of implementation, especially not in the case of study periods and of the credit values, however, there is some convergence regarding the study time in the last years toward the dominance of 3+2 programs. The legal basis for the passing on linear model is the Act No. 288/2004, according to which the Bachelor programs last 3-4 years, the Master programs 1-2 years, and the PhD for 3 years. The implementation of the multi-cycle structure was scheduled to the academic year 2005/06, furthermore, the introduction of the ECTS is going to be compulsory, instructions are drafted about the joint programs, and the learning outcomes are also prescribed. In addition to these policy actions, the regulations have been emphasized the competence-, student- and practice-oriented education. The formation of the framework of internal and external quality assurance and its principles are also prescribed in regulations.

Some years later, the implementation of the Bologna objectives were packaged into a comprehensive reform program that aims to transform again the entire education system. Regarding higher education the Bologna and Lisbon policy goals are included in a strategy (Strategia... 2002-2010). Under this umbrella several objectives are emphasized: structural and curricular reform of higher education, restructuring of the governance and funding of the sector, reform of institutional management, the vertical differentiation and the hierarchization of the university-level institutions is highlighted, new selection methods are to be introduced, the competition among institutions is supported. Furthermore, they wish to diversify the program supply, to strengthen the university autonomy, to support the partnership between higher education institutions and business companies, to support international cooperations and to promote university research. The supranational and intergovernmental reform goals are unified under a comprehensive change initiative, where the Bologna process and higher

education policies of the European Union is set as the legitimation and reference point for particular national reform ambitions. The reform strategy envisions deep structural transformations, which finally not only lead to postponed deadlines, but cause large gaps between political rhetoric and institutional reality. The critics emphasize that the Romanian politics successfully transformed the European objectives into laws and regulations, which prescribe clear directions for the implementation. However, as they argue, on institutional level these visions are falling and there is a gap between these ambitions and the persisting reality. The micro-implementations occurred with various shortcomings, despite the fact that the aims of the Bologna-reform are not at all accompanied by such definite rejection and controversy that one can find in so called “Humboldtian-countries”. According to one’s argument regarding the schedule of the implementation the laws and regulations followed each other in such a rapid succession that it was impossible to keep up with them, furthermore, the amendments submitted to the rapidly developed regulations need continuous modification through amendments themselves. At the same time, the introduction of the Bologna-model was not accompanied by detailed guidance of the affected actors and on different levels of the system. (Singer et al. 2006)

The structural and curricular reform

The policy debates on the reform objectives and various policy issues (e.g. the future of the binary system, what is the desirable institutional configuration, how can the linear structure and the Romanian traditions of higher education be balanced with each other, and what is the role of different institutional types, both university and non-university institutions in the new arrangement), which dominated the political agenda in other signatory countries

there lacked or did appear only in informal discussions. In the public debates on higher education policies and problems the multi-cycle model has been viewed as an unequivocal and universal solution for all the problems of the Romanian higher education. The discourse has been dominated from the top-down, by a technocratic and progressivist political rhetoric, where the new structural arrangement it was viewed as without alternative.

With regard to the institutional configuration and reconsideration of the role of university and non-university institutions, there was made several efforts to create a unified system and to weaken the importance of institutional types. These formal policy initiatives produced a good ground for Bologna-reforms, where the program level and the vertical differentiation are emphasized instead of institutional types and horizontal differentiations. Within the current institutional arrangement the universities and university-level institutions (polytechnics, institutes and academies) are recognized. The differences between the types of institutions were tried to be reduced by acknowledging two types of universities, where the non-university institutions received the possibility to gain recognition as university-level institutions, namely specialized universities.

Consequently, in the Romanian higher education the binary configuration is preserved at some extent, where the polytechnics, academies, and institutes are specialized (traditionally, non-university sector), and they are organizing professional and practice-oriented programs. However, the university and non-university arrangement in their traditional form still did not exist. The internal structuration of institutional network takes place according to the higher degree offered and the quality of research (e.g. traditional universities at the top, most applied science universities at the middle, and most of ex-colleges, non-university and private institutions at the bottom of the internal hierarchy). The competition between the universities and university-level institutions is governed mostly

by traditional prestige and less by innovative answers to the external challenges. The Romanian higher education programs are oscillating between the tradition of vocational, highly specialized character and general educational emphasis promoted by the Bologna. The functional overlap and the vocational and academic drift between the university and the non-university sector can clearly be observed. In this arrangement the universities by integrating and academic upgrading the college programs, integrating several institutions of engineering and offering short-term study programs become functionally closer to non-university institutions. Under the Bologna process the vertical integration is definitely increased among the universities of engineering, institutions concentrating on professional education and the new institutions with narrow portfolios. Consequently, in order to preserve their statuses (for example not to be downgraded to specialized institutes) and to increase their possibilities they are not only launching higher-level programs (for example Master and PhD programs with which the university rank can be maintained), but they also put greater emphasis on the academic program supply and research. In fact, the running of academic programs is to be considered as one of the main devices to become a university, for ex-polytechnics, colleges etc.

At the same time, in the curricula of vocational programs were increased the academic content, while earlier they were mostly practical. The increasing of academic and theory-oriented curricular elements within the specialized program supply aims to provide higher permeability between different institutions and opening the way toward further studies (Master programs). But despite observable academic drift the vocational and professional programs preserved their traditional characteristics, especially the high specialization of Bachelor and Master programs, thus offers useful and directly applicable knowledge and skills on the labour market. Additionally, their research profile is highly applied instead of basic research.

Under the political umbrella of the Bologna process the problem of Romanian institutional network and the possible integration of small, local institutions to large-scale universities again were placed on the agenda. After the political transformation takes places the first wave of a greater institutional integrations, when some university-centers rapidly, incoherently were formed. These shortcomings raised internal tensions and quality concerns. Under this second wave of policy ambitions regarding the integration, there is claimed to put higher emphasis on regional aspects and mission of institutions. According to the plans the authorizations necessary for the founding of the new state institutions will only be issued along with the consideration of the regional demands by the Ministry. The strategy seeks to form such universities in particular regions that cover the whole spectrum of higher education and offer study opportunities in every program level. However, the drivers behind this regionalization project seem to be financial and administrative, with special regard to the perceived proliferation of programs and institutions, where a regional restructuring allows the central policy-making to rationalize the network.

At the same time, the performance-based funding and other performance criteria envisions the hierarchization of higher education institutions according to prestige and quality. In order to improve the quality of private higher education the standards required for the accreditation and authorization will be more rigorous (Strategia... 2002-2010).

The introduction of the Bologna-model legitimized the reconsideration of the program structure, namely the rationalization of the proliferated program supply. Within the Romanian higher education, the education areas, the program branches and the specializations (Bachelor programs) are not defined by the organizations or professional bodies entrusted by the academic community, but the Ministry (approval by decree is necessary). This practice is considered as the maintenance of centralization in some actor's perspec-

tive, which incited heavy criticism. During the implementation of the cycle-structure the already existing 369 specializations were reduced to 60 and the Ministry elaborated a new program structure. However, from then the number of Bachelor specializations continuously grows (for example, in the years 2008 and 2009 their number was approximately 313). (Singer et al. 2006)

The implementation of the two-cycle programs was started in the academic year of 2005/06. The Bachelor programs were envisioned as unified, with 3-4 years study length, which according to the original concept provide opportunities, both entering the labour market and the further studies. However, lately the legitimization of existing differences (e.g. professional and academic, as a very simple differentiation) in Bachelor programs was placed on the agenda. The unified Master programs have been implemented in the 2009/2010 academic year at the universities, but before this a number of universities have experimented with Master programs of 1, 1.5 and 2 years. Today the study length converges to 2 year programs. However, the structure of program levels and their relationship was weakly conceptualized. The micro-implementation of Bachelors was fulfilled in most cases without any vision on advanced levels. In several cases, there was launched Masters which stayed alone without Bachelor input, but despite of this received accreditation. In Romanian higher education there are available four types of Masters (academic, engineering, arts and professional) and two types of doctoral (professional and academic) programs beside the unified Bachelor programs.

A research was examining the reception of the Bachelor and the experimental Master programs directly following their introduction among the faculty and the students (Novak 2006). According to the results, within the Bachelor programs the curricular goal is to offer comprehensive and deep knowledge to the students (general and specialized, disciplinary and professional) similarly extensive as in the old-programs. As a result the Bachelors from curricular perspective are interpreted mainly as a finishing cycle. All pre-

vious knowledge is to be taught in the first-cycle with the formal transformation or more adequately forcing of the previous four-year curriculum into three years. The majority of faculty staff views the content of the Master programs more or less similar to Bachelor programs according to another survey (Voicu 2007), which is especially parallel in the first period of study. This curricular arrangement was elaborated to provide access opportunities to Master-level degree for students from other institutions and programs in order to supplement their knowledge and competencies. However, there could be considered as a possible explanation the old curricular visions, which strive for extensive and deep knowledge on most programs and is cyclical in arrangement.

Table 4: Content of the Master programs in the opinion of faculty staff of universities (%)

Master programs	University status		Size of the faculties			Total
	State	Private	Under 500	500-1400	Over 1400	
The material of the first cycle is taught again	2	1	2	1	1	2
Some of them teach again the material already explained, the others are new	19	32	30	16	15	20
Most of them are new, the others teach the materials already explained	57	52	56	55	63	57
All of them are new	22	15	11	27	21	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Voicu 2007, 48.

Opinions are varied regarding the value of the Bachelor programs on the labour market. We need to note that the researches consider the perception of Bachelors mostly from the viewpoint of academ-

ics and students. There is very little knowledge from the labour market side. Two thirds (62.9%) of the faculty think that the Bachelor programs offer sufficient knowledge and skills for finding a job, especially because the labour market is heterogeneous, rapidly change and has vague demands toward the employees, while the knowledge of those completed the Bachelor programs are general enough and partly specific to be able to adapt to the particular demands. However, there are also counter-arguments. The 26.1% percentage of the faculty thinks that the acquired knowledge and competencies in the first cycle are too general for the employers' demands. They state that under the short three year study period the students do not receive enough theoretical, professional and practical preparation, and in addition the labour market is not able to receive them (Novak 2006). Although the students are more satisfied and optimistic regarding the Bachelor programs, nevertheless they see that the current system is forcing them to further learning, since only in this way will be their degrees fully valuable on the labour market. According to the faculty, in terms of study length the programs did not become shorter, but longer, because the majority of the students intend to learn further (Voicu 2007). In order to assess the real labour market value of Bachelors, there need to be conducted further researches on the status, wage, working conditions etc. guaranteed by a Bachelor diploma and on the reception by different sectors (public and private).

Implementation of the curricular reform is considered to be unsuccessful and misconceived by some authors. Furthermore, they talk about the survival of the old content within a new framework. The content of programs and the introduction of means necessary for flexible learning paths are also criticized. The aim was to create a large number of optional courses, with which the students would receive greater freedom and responsibility in organizing her/his studies. Instead, the current experiences show that the prearranged paths are available only and in the Bachelor programs compulsory

courses remain dominant. In addition, the curriculum is yet more disciplinary against the interdisciplinary contents envisioned by reform strategies (Singer et al. 2006).

The credit-system was introduced in Romania directly following the political transformation, within the framework of the Erasmus-program, but as a unified practice it was finalized in all cycles and at all institutions only under the Bologna process. It is compulsory for all Romanian universities from the year 2005/06. According to the concept of the ECTS it provides possibilities to form standardized credit-systems at the universities in Europe and Romania, and by the credit-transfer system it provides mobility within the European Higher Education Area. With the introduction of the ECTS the learning outcomes are to be defined formally in competences and student-centered and innovative teaching methods are to be used.

There are constant debates between the Rectors Conference and the student councils on the method of the implementation of the ECTS, current level of the implementation, on the students' freedom and the shortcomings of credit-transfer system. There is no agreement on what should be reflected in the credit value (for example workload of students, attendance on seminars and lectures, competences etc.). Student councils often criticize the introduction of the ECTS and the practice of certain institutions regarding credit allocation. The existing credit allocation practices do not reflect the work of the students, but that of the faculty, because it is provided mainly on the basis of attendance of seminars and lectures. However, considering the weight of the courses in a program, there are large differences regarding the credit value of a given course, in spite of the fact that the students work are the same or even more in some courses. Recognition of extra-curricular activities of the students with credits is almost totally missing from the credit allocation system in Romania. The credit transfer and the recognition practices are raising further problems. According to the students experiences from the Babeş-Bolyai Univer-

sity regarding mobility the credit transfer is not processed efficiently, because the credits and competences gained at foreign universities are not always acknowledged in the mother institutions (for example the courses are qualified as facultative or optional, or the content and the length of the course does not match perfectly and this is the reason of not acknowledging the course). At the same time the following problem appears: while the Romanian universities acknowledge for example the credits gained at a French university, this is not so in reverse. The inside mobility and credit transfer has the same characteristics: practically exist only between the high prestige universities that mutually acknowledge to each other the studies undertaken.

Table 5: Opinions on the acknowledgement of credits within the Erasmus-program (%)

	Faculty	Students
Credits are acknowledged regardless of the method of acquirement	10	12
Only the credits gained on courses with similar content are acknowledged, to acknowledge the others the students must take exams in the mother institution	56	22
Regardless of the credits gained within the Erasmus-program, the students must take exams from all courses	5	9
No information on the Erasmus-program	4	28
Does not know what happens with the credits	25	30
Total	100	100

Source: Voicu 2007, 51.

A general opinion among the signatory countries that the Bachelor-level fulfil the function of mass higher education, whilst the Master- and mostly the doctoral level concentrate on the elite higher education. However, these expectations in Romania similar to other countries (e.g. Slovakia, Serbia, Poland, Ukraine) remained unrealized, since the student masses still wish to continue their studies.

Consequently, the social acceptance of Bachelors is low, except the vocational-oriented programs (e.g. informatics).

The first two cycles are seen as the place of mass education, whilst the doctoral cycle takes the role of elite education. However, we must admit that this picture is differentiated according to disciplines and study areas. The public financed places according to different program-levels support this statement: 62,000 on Bachelor programs, 34,000 on Master programmes and 3,000 in PhD courses (2008-2009). These numbers in Master-level even is higher, but not registered, because the public services (e.g. public administration, health, education, social services etc.) finance for their employees the further studies, thus the Master-programs have a wider market between adults and also is funded by public budget.

Quality issues in the Bologna process

In the academic and political debates the higher education steering reforms (e.g. steering through quality standards, university rankings, performance indicators and funding) received more attention from the actors than the structural restructuring. In addition, this latter issue (the implementation of multi-cycle structure and various relating policy tools) are viewed from the perspective of governance reform and quality assurance. We could claim that these issues are gained more importance on higher education policies and actors perspectives than the original Bologna-objectives.

One may find several alternative and competing concepts within the public debate on what is quality and how can one measure it (for example, the number of Nobel-prizes, internationally recognized professors, Romanian institution in the international league tables, correspondence to the envisioned aims, number of international students in particular institutions etc.). The discourse on quality in Romanian universities is currently dominated by the

place of universities on international rankings and between top-universities, the problems regarding the fulfilling of international performance criteria's (mostly measured and envisioned through research performance and hard science perspective), the potentials of internal hierarchization and additional funding according to the performance. These claims, issues and ambitions define nowadays the renewal perspectives of quality policies and higher education. This policy discourse gives a context for the debates on higher education restructuring. The argumentation of reform strategies are concerned primarily with the issues of quality and performance. As one can easily observe the Lisbon agenda governs the content of these higher education policies.

The diagnosis of internal actors formed about Romanian higher education with specific concern on quality is as follows: the majority of the Romanian higher education institutions are unable to conform to the European quality standards, they hardly ever take part in international research and development, the level and potentials of innovation is low, they cannot meet the labour market demands and they generate unemployed graduates, and the corruption in the system is extremely high. In addition, the main concern is that the Romanian universities are unsuccessful to enter the global leagues.

The most important policy means in governing and controlling higher education are the quality assurance and the performance indicators developed according to the British-practices. The most important actor in higher education governance besides the Ministry of Education (government) is the ARACIS (Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior – The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). The organization is responsible for the program accreditation in Bachelor- and Master-level. In addition, elaborates proposals for institutional accreditation to the Parliament and its educational commission, since in Romania the accreditation has two pillars: professional (program accreditation/professional decision) and political (institutional ac-

creditation/political decision). Furthermore, in the new governance structure there are other buffer and governmental organizations in charge to carry out institutional audits and evaluations, which fulfil their roles in the following structure: the CNATDCU (Consiliul Național de Atestare a Titlurilor, Diplomelor și Certificatelor Universitare – The National Council of Recognition of University Titles, Degrees and Certificates) carry on audits regarding human resources; the CNFIS (Consiliul Național pentru Finanțarea Învățământului Superior - The National Council of Higher Education Funding) examines the efficiency of institutional management and leadership; finally, the new University Ethics Council (Consiliul de Etică Universitară) protects university ethics, mainly with regard to the research ethics. These buffer organizations control the higher education institutions through performance indicators and according to recent policy proposals through funding, and as a secondary effect seeks to empower the Romanian universities of highest prestige and reputation in order to promote internal hierarchies. In addition, the planned resource concentration to these excellence places wish to support their entry to the international higher education market, preferably with the gaining of some top positions in international rankings.

The above mentioned buffer organizations undertake various functions in Romanian higher education. Under the implementation of the Bologna-reform the ARACIS was transformed from the old Accreditation Council to a quality assurance agency, which means also a new function behind the accreditation.

The council is organized along different study fields and fulfils two tasks: (1) accreditation of the Bachelor and Master programs, and (2) quality assurance within these levels. *The accreditation.* The ARACIS elaborates the methodology and standards of the accreditation of the different programs, and on the institutions' request, evaluates their study programs. The evaluation of the ARACIS is the basis for the institutional accreditation by the Par-

liament, which is recorded in accreditation laws for every institution. *The quality assurance*. It develops the standards and the performance indicators for the higher education quality assurance. It prepares institutional audits, controls and evaluates the formation and functioning of the institutional quality assurance, the introduction of which is compulsory in every institution.

The other important actor of quality-policy is the CNCSIS, which evaluates the research and scholarly performance of institutions, elaborates performance indicators for evaluations, and classifies the institutions, faculties and programs, providing hierarchies. Furthermore, undertakes the accreditation of publishing houses and scholarly journals, and funding of university research projects (competitive resource distribution, organization of grant competitions) post-gradual study programs and research centers. The organization has six committees formed along the lines of different scientific areas, where the members are selected from the academic community, especially those who are considered with the highest national and international reputation in their fields.

The central task of CNFIS is to make proposals to the Ministry of Education for the distribution of financial resources among public institutions. The organization as one can observe influences the higher education through funding. Currently, it is preoccupied with the task of developing new funding methods and performance indicators, through which the funding of the budget institutions could be differentiated (e.g. funding of excellence). The working material issued by the council views quality primarily through scholarly and research activities. The evaluation standards follow the criterias elaborated by the European Union almost literally. These are the following: (1) national research contracts, (2) international research contracts, (3) research contracts with companies, (4) accomplished doctoral dissertations, (5) studies and articles published in referred and reviewed journals, (6) books published by recognized publishers, (7) inventions and patents, (8) research centers or recognized

art pieces, (9) membership in professional organizations and academies, (10) national awards for scholarly research (Analiza... 2008, 4). One of the most debated parts of the indicators is the introduction of ISI-articles into the evaluation and regarding them as the most important aspect of high quality, regardless of various aspects of higher education and research (e.g. different scientific areas and levels, program- and institutional types).

The Presidential Committee for the Analysis and Policy Elaboration in Education and Research (Comisia Prezidențială pentru Analiza și Elaborarea Politicilor din Domeniul Educației și Cercetării) was convened by the Romanian President in 2007 in order to prepare a strategy for higher education and research, entitled “Education and Research for Knowledge Society” (Educație și Cercetare pentru Societatea Cunoașterii). Regarding the policy goals this strategy also follows above mentioned direction. They wish to achieve such specific goals in the higher education until 2015 as (1) placement of three universities on the world rank for the 500 best universities, (2) reaching the EU innovation average and increasing the academic “production to its quintuple, and (3) supporting the academics to become the “elite of the nation”. They wish to achieve these objectives with the following policy ambitions:

1. differentiation of the universities and the concentration of resources,
2. reorganization of the human resource policies,
3. promotion of the student-centered universities,
4. modernization of the management and leadership of the universities,
5. differentiated and flexible funding of the universities,
6. provision of the quality and relevance of the university higher education,
7. reorganization of the R+D+I system.

The experts propose the external evaluation of performances of both public and private institutions, and where this is too low the public institutions can be sanctioned with the withdrawal of budget resources, whilst the diplomas of private ones must be refused to recognize by the state: it is argued that the academic mediocrity can no longer be sustained from public funds (Educație... 2008). Differentiation and hierarchy of the institutions are to be configured along four groups, where (1) the first would contain the research-intensive universities that have programs in each cycle, but the gradual and postgradual programs are emphasized, (2) the second would be made up by research and educational institutions which organize mostly Bachelor and Master programs, (3) the third contains the education-oriented institutions mostly with Bachelor programs, and finally, (4) the fourth are the institutions organizing vocational courses (Educație... 2008).

The quality of Bachelor- and education-oriented institutions are hardly discussed, which means that is not considered as an aspect of competitiveness. The content of higher education policies suggests that are elaborated primarily from the perspective of the institutions offering advanced education levels (Master and doctoral). Currently according to the strategy (Educație... 2008), the most important issue regarding the Master- and doctoral programs would be to stabilize the professional status of the Master programs (for example they shall be accompanied by higher income and positions), to strengthen the four types of Master programs with governmental regulations, and in order to strengthen the professional orientation in curricula one third of the training activities would be carried out by practice-oriented professionals. Seemingly, the higher education policies under development and partly implemented keep the smaller, alternative institutions at the periphery. According to the assumptions, the vertical differentiation supported by governmental means will not only give additional dynamics to higher education, but will strengthen the homogenization proc-

esses. The universities with narrow portfolios will be forced by these higher education policies to grow, constantly provide new program levels, and strive to enlarge their research potentials. However, there is still the question what kinds of possibilities are available among the scarce resources and to what kinds of solutions can these institutions recourse to. Summarily, we can state that the so called 'Ivy-League anxiety' is strongly present in the Romanian higher education, and the governmental policies strive to achieve internal hierarchies and the strengthening of vertical differences through the quality assurance.

Internationalization and mobility

Regarding the real developments of internationalization and the internationalization policies of the Romanian higher education we have scarce and uninformative sources. Therefore we are to present here only modestly elaborated and poorly grounded part of the article. In general, we can argue that the highly formalized and structured curriculum and learning paths, with the dominance of compulsory subjects hinders the intra-national and international mobility. There were various programs launched within the Erasmus and Tempus programs from 1989 and 1991 to improve the mobility of faculty staff and students. In 1998 Romania joins the CEEPUS program (Central European Exchange for University Students Program), which makes possible the mobility of the faculty and students between universities on all levels of the higher education. The barriers of the academic mobility formally were overcome in all of the Bologna-countries. According to this in Romania also were made several policy efforts to eliminate the structural and organizational barriers to mobility (e.g. implementation of a cycle structure, modularization of curricula, introduction of credit-system, international institutional agreements, scholarships etc.).

However, such particular hindering forces as the financial problems and substitution of the staff in their mobility period still exist. Different tools were developed and implemented concerning the recognition of outside study period, but despite of this it seems that the number of Romanian students participating in the Erasmus-program, although shows an increase, but is still behind the expectations. An interesting addition to the problem is that in 2007 28% of the Romanian students knew nothing about the Erasmus program. (Voicu 2007)

Table 6: Number of the institutions and students participating in the Erasmus program

Year	Participating institutions	Students
1998/99	30	1,250
1999/00	32	1,497
2000/01	40	2,000
2001/02	45	2,110
2002/03	45	2,400
2006/07	no. date.	3,350

Source: Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation 2008.

According to the Eurydice-report of 2009 – which also watched mobility under the framework of other programs – the percentage of the incoming and outgoing students in Romania falls between 1-3% (Eurydice 2009, 44). From this the percentage of Erasmus-students was 2.1% in the year 2006/07. The most important target countries of the Romanian students are France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Hungary from Central Europe, additionally, the United States is also popular (Erasmus Statistics, 2006-2007). Romania within the European Higher Education Area is primarily a sending country. If we do not count the students arriving from the Central and Eastern European countries, the most of international students studying in Romania are coming from the Arabic countries and Middle-Asia, and not from Western Europe or North-America,

which would be so highly appreciated by the actors. At the same time, it is important to note that majority of the students coming from Central and Eastern Europe are from Moldova and their mother tongue is Romanian.

There are no analyses available on other dimensions of internationalization and such finer aspects as for example the question of how can the institutions with different legal status (private) take part in the programs aimed the internationalization of higher education. There is a wider agreement between the academics regarding the importance of national and international (especially among the European universities) cooperation. In order to support this we frequently find arguments that promote the academic and professional mobility, the mutual recognition of studies between the partner institutions and the harmonization of the programs. At the same time, some actors argue that the international cooperation and the harmonization of curricula will enhance the employability of students and there are various benefits (e.g. language skills, knowledge transfer etc.) from the experience abroad (Singer et al. 2006). Regarding the internationalization of the education one third of the academics think that they are able to teach in a foreign language, whilst the majority (78%) agrees about the necessity of more foreign language programs in Romanian higher education (Voicu 2007). However, there is no research data concerning how the institutions must support the incoming students with additional services (e.g. mentor programs, counselling).

Recent higher education policy developments

The Romanian Parliament after several years of negotiation passed a new comprehensive law on education (1/2011 Education Act). The new law reflects the higher education debates and the perceived challenges of Romanian higher education system, namely

the “quality deterioration” of faculty staff (especially the dilution of professorial performance), the elimination of all-pervading corruption and nepotism in higher education, and the problems regarding the academic and professional, practice-oriented curricular emphasis, the poor international/global performance and lack of internal transparency of Romanian higher education system. The policies traced from these challenges are entirely new in higher education, whilst in other areas little or no considerable modification was initiated. As one can easily realize, these small-scale reforms - probably except the introduction of Habilitation – are based on very similar concerns and policies to other Bologna- and EU-countries (Lisbon Process).

Firstly, the problem concerning of low scholarly and professional achievements of Romanian professors is to be improved with the introduction of Habilitation (*atestat de abilitare*), a certificate previously unknown in Romania. The procedure, however, is not as complex as in other countries (e.g. Germany, Hungary), it consist only of the elaboration and public defense of a thesis before an academic committee. The Romanian Habilitation qualifies for supervising PhD students and the occupation of university professor positions. In addition, the appointment to various university positions (assistant, lecturer etc.) is abolished from the previously required “oldness” (age discrimination) in the higher education. According to the new policies the professional and scholarly performance would govern the appointments to these positions; however, the higher education institutions maintained the right to shape this appointment practice.

Secondly, the other considerable higher education policy innovation is the differentiation of second cycle to three types of Master programs, with underlying curricular emphasis: (1) professional Master, (2) research Master, and (3) didactic Master. The real improvements are the separation of academic and professional Master degrees, where the first is not only the preparation for further stud-

ies on doctoral level, but could be recognized as the first year of doctoral training. Additionally, the research Master would be organized by the doctoral schools. The latter focus on a deep and specialized education, mainly for entry the labour market. Moreover qualifies even for further studies at doctoral level, but without the time-benefits assured by the research Master. These changes could be considered as the hallway for several institutions to be transformed into “specialized” institutions, which offer specialized Masters and Doctorates (e.g. M. Ed. or Ed.D.), indeed, in some areas instead of uniform first-cycle specialized Bachelors (e.g. teacher training).

Thirdly, the government and semi-independent puffer organizations implement the policies regarding the hierarchization and classification of institutions. We can argue that the rationales for such policies in one hand are financial in nature, in other hand creating transparency of missions and profiles. The Romanian higher education institutions are classified into three main categories (still without sub-categories): (1) the teaching-oriented institutions, (2) the teaching- and research-oriented, and artistic institutions, and (3) advanced research and teaching institutions. Seemingly, the vertical differentiation overwrites the horizontal differentiation, whilst the categorization according to the existence and quality of research overwrites the categorization according to functions. As well, the Bachelor and Master programs will be ranked, which provides the basis for differentiated public funding. Behind the government and their organizations exist alternative rankers (the Ad Astra non-profit organization) producing Shanghai-type rankings of institutions and programs. Their rankings are biased toward the scientific activity and performance of institutions. The consumers of these classifications and rankings are mainly the policy-makers (the governments), rather than the students and industry, since the culture for such informational services still is almost inexistent.

Concluding remarks

The intergovernmental (Bologna), supranational (EU) and national higher education policy perspectives have clearly overlapped in recent Romanian reform initiatives. From a wider and political perspective the Bologna process in Romania has proved to be a euphemism, which gives a political platform to and covers various reform ambitions: national and supranational, and ideologically neoliberal, new-managerialist change initiatives.

The degree reform, namely the implementation of a multi-cycle structure, creates an umbrella for agenda-setting and policy formulation of re-imagining of state and higher education relationships through the lenses of new governance ideas (governance reforms), challenging the established power-structures and introducing new institutional management arrangements, and creating frameworks for new funding and control mechanisms (evaluations and standards, performance-based funding). This ideology and discourse continuously mark the Romanian higher education reform ideas in the last decades, however, in practice these remained only partially or even not realized in the level of institutions.

The reform choreography followed the traditional perspective, as it was a closed, top-down and bureaucratic process. In this arena the institutional actors had no influence on Bologna-policies. The preconditions for and leeway of these reform initiatives are the higher education traditions and the local interpretation of policy goals, which in the perspectives of reform enthusiast is considered as the distortion and throw of the original goals. From a narrow technical and structural perspective the Bologna process indicates the implementation of the two- or multi-cycle degree structure. Under this process the institutional configuration formally tend to develop into a mix of unified and university-dominated system, where the higher education policy strive to strengthen the vertical differentiation and the program level are emphasized, instead of institutional types and horizontal differentia-

tion. Accordingly, the internal and external competition is viewed as a high political priority.

The implementation of the new degree structure in the political discourse was considered as a universal solution for various problems of the system. However, the debates on various issues (e.g. institutional arrangements, institutional and program types, curricular philosophies, different functions in unified programs etc.) and expectations (e.g. the causal relationships between structural reforms and the improvement on quality, attractiveness, relevancy etc. of programs) remain unrealized or takes place only between a small and closed minority of policy actors. With regard to the curricular and program visions, as one can observe, the old curricular and program philosophies survived under the new frameworks. The perceived shortcomings of implementation did support this observation.

Under the implementation of Bologna-goals were also reconsidered the quality control frameworks. Regarding this arrangement, the power and control over higher education was redistributed between the state and the buffer organizations, empowering the latter organizations and thus strengthening the central control by various evaluation and quality mechanisms. These processes according to the expectations will lead to the deepening of vertical differences, will raise the performance of some institutions and creates the possibility of the emergence of internationally recognized universities.

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The Bologna Process in Serbia: With a Special Focus on the Situation of the Higher Education of Vojvodina

Irén Gábrity Molnár

The purpose of the present study¹ is the presentation of the Serbian higher educational changes as a result of the adoption of the Bologna requirements on state as well as institutional levels. The official opinions and expectations (“the voice of the ministry“) will be discussed as well as the professional and student points of view regarding the state and prospects of the reform (new accreditation, the realistic meaning of quality assurance, actual practices). The study focuses on the exploration and description of the course of events with the method of document analysis, observation and in-depth interviews, for instance, the debates that preceded the passing of the University of Novi Sad² constitution and the practical obstacles of its application. Meanwhile, the results and difficulties of the Bologna process adaptation have also become obvious (to be more specific, the resistance of the academic community towards the changes). The in-depth interviews reveal which groups in power participate in the facilitation and hindrance of the Bologna process. It was important to analyze the reaction of the supply side, i.e. the state sphere (the analysis of the ministry reports), the agents of the civil, foundation and private spheres as well as the reaction of the students and the labour market (empirical research, in-depth interviews.)

¹ Translated by Eszter Gábrity.

² The only university in Vojvodina which has 14 faculties (Novi Sad, Subotica, Sombor and Zrenjanin). It was founded in 1960. The second largest higher educational institution following the one in Belgrade, but as for its reform policies it often precedes Belgrade.

The appearance of the reform, its preliminaries and history

Although EU accession is a relatively distant objective for Serbia, the state signed the Bologna Declaration in 2001 and committed itself to introducing reforms in accordance with the Bologna principles until 2010. The implementation of the Bologna principles is a crucial task in Serbia. Optimistic statements dominate the internal reports of the accreditation organizations referring to quality of insurance and rationalization. Agreement can be noticed among the accreditation organizations, everybody acknowledges the need of creating harmony between the European and Serbian norms of the system of higher educational institutions and quality assurance. What is also emphasized is the compatibility with the European educational systems and rationality in higher education.

The reform ambitions also yield difficulties. Practical halts and the controversial standpoints of the reform agents slow down the innovating efforts, especially as a result of the following habitual ideas:

- The faculties wish to remain autonomous legal entities and do not want to be integrated into various professional institutions.
- In their communication with the state the faculties focus only on the opinion of the Minister of Education and not on that of the alternative and consulting committees.
- It is considered that knowledge plays a crucial role, wherefore university reforms are needed. However, when the establishment of the operative plans is started, the faculties step back in fear of the potential challenge it might offer them. They might lose their positions if they do not provide practical knowledge, “only” academic knowledge that is not interdisciplinary and does not result in communicational skills.
- The newly founded private faculties and colleges prove to be the quickest representatives and imitators of the European educational model, who indeed fill certain gaps, but they also set

in motion the conservative institutions which indeed are afraid of competition. The words mostly stressed by the leaders of higher state education (who are against the reforms) are “autonomy” and “quality”.

- State universities also refer to „academic freedom”, when they negotiate with the economic management and not with the state.³

Large-scale reforms were implemented at the University of Novi Sad within the framework of the Serbian higher education (in 2005). Among other things the following principles were introduced: „Recognizing that the relationship between higher education institutions and the public authorities is influenced by the historical, legal, political and financial circumstances of the country. Nevertheless, there are certain general principles which should guide and inform decisions concerning higher education:

- *Higher education institutions must be empowered with real functional autonomy*, not only as something desirable in its own right, but because it is an effective mechanism to enable the goals of societal development to be achieved efficiently;
- *Academic freedom* must be safeguarded;
- An adequate distance between higher education institutions and ministries can be made through neutral expert intermediary bodies.
- The development of higher education should be informed by a *strategic and long-term vision*;
- Governments, higher education institutions, students and other stakeholders throughout Europe should work together in *partnership based upon mutual trust and confidence*;

³ Based on the opinion of Ladislav Novak, the president of the Strategic Developmental Committee of the University of Novi Sad. Conference of Universities, Belgrade, 2004.

- *Higher education institutions must be fully accountable* for the very substantial public and private funds devoted to support their mission;
- Higher education institutions must have freedom of action if they are to respond effectively to increasing domestic and international competition.
- Quality assurance and improvement, external evaluation and accreditation are all areas of European importance to higher education institutions;
- The role of the external authorities is to check that institutions are well-administered and are preserving the public interest, but in ways that do not damage autonomy and do not involve bureaucratic, paper-driven regulation...⁴

Higher education buffer organizations have been established in a number of systems to act as intermediaries between universities and the government and are concerned with such matters as the funding of teaching and research, quality assurance, strategic policy development, etc. Normally, buffer bodies may receive government funds, and distribute them to higher education institutions for teaching and research on an objective basis (for example a formula), and provide other funding specific to project expenses. In other cases, buffers may not have the funding functions of government, but are concerned with such matters as quality assurance, strategic policy development, etc. The experience of those countries with buffer bodies suggests that such structures could play an important role in the European Higher Education Area, supporting

⁴ The Novi Sad Initiative: Addressing Questions of Governance in Creating the European Higher Education Area. On 28–30 October 2005, participants representing a variety of countries, institutions, experiences and responsibilities gathered in Novi Sad for an *International Seminar on Higher Education: The University of the 21st Century - Emerging Models of Independence* organized by the University of Novi Sad, the Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and the German Rectors Conference (HRK), supported by the European University Association, the Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES, ESIB, the Salzburg Seminar, and the Magna Charta Observatory under the auspices of the Fund for an Open Society and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

the practical achievement of the principles articulated above. Specifically, buffer bodies operating with a substantial degree of autonomy could:

- facilitate the detailed steering of the higher education system within a broad policy framework determined by governments;
- bring specific expertise and management capacity to bear, which can facilitate the strategic development of the higher education sector;
- encourage long-term strategic planning of the higher education system;
- promote subsidiaries and allow long-term considerations to inform decisions;
- safeguard and promote university autonomy;
- provide for a separation of functions ensuring that governments focus on setting national policies while institutions deliver such policies;
- safeguard and help promote and improve academic standards and promote commitment and cohesion;
- limit unnecessary bureaucratic control, interference, and micro management;
- limit direct political involvement in higher education institutions and the inappropriate use of the power of the purse to restrain academic freedom.⁵

Higher educational participants' attitudes during the implementation of the Bologna reforms

The participants of the reform process are the following: first of all, the political administrative (government, ministry of education and

⁵ Cf. the statements of the Ministry of Education: "Strategija ministarstva obrazovanja i sporta za 2005-2010. godinu. Strategija sektora za više i visoko obrazovanje", pp. 93-99, http://www.coe.org.rs/eng/tdoc_sr/coe_office_in_belgrade/projects_sr/?conid=62&lnk=1, accessed 01/03/2011.

its committees), second, the institutional level (state and private) with its professors and students, and, finally, the sphere of users with its labour force demands (so far as an outsider). The bodies founded by the government play a decisive role, i.e. the so-called conferences that are wedged between the government and the institutions (Conference of Universities, the Conference of Academia and Professional Training and the Conference of Students) which are the forums of problem discussion and recommendation as well as the Accreditation Committee, whose members are predominantly university professors. The Serbian Parliament passed the law concerning accreditation on 12 October 2010 (in Serbian *Zakon o akreditaciji*); it regulates the foundation of the Body of Accreditation (in Serbian *Akreditaciono telo Srbije*).⁶

The state sphere: official opinions and expectations, „the voice of the ministry”

The reform of the Serbian educational system started a few months after the democratic changes (in October 2000). The academic community decided to establish alternative university networks as a result of nationalism and high political centralism during the era of Milosevic’s dictatorship, which enabled the free and democratic discussion of opinions. Higher educational reform also started. The Alternative Academic Educational Network (*Alternativna akademska obrazovna mreža – AAOM*) was operated by means of foreign financial support in Belgrade as the affiliated department of the *UNESCO-Chair for University Management*. It played a mostly informative role in the process of higher educational reorganization, the faculty achieved a lot preparing the conception and the public presentation of the ideas concerning the reforms. It rallied

⁶ <http://www.emportal.rs/vesti/srbija/135343.html> – comments and <http://www.ats.rs/>, accessed 01/03/2011.

the academic community, intellectuals, students, civil organizations, and international conferences around itself and kept in touch with the Ministry. The faculty played a significant role in the formation of the new higher educational law (2005). Under Zoran Đinđić, the Serbian government established the Educational Committee of Serbian Universities, which in cooperation with academic circles also participated in the preparation of the educational reforms. The educational reforms started in Serbia, when the Minister of Education signed the Bologna Declaration in 2001 and the Lisbon Agreement in 2003. The Ministry was responsible for the design and redistribution of budget sources, the licenses⁷ of institutions, administrative control, the operation of the Higher Education Accreditation Committee⁸ (*Komisija za akreditaciju i proveru kvaliteta*, from here on: FAB), and the formation of a degree registration system.

The ministry can rely on the Higher Educational National Committee (*Nacionalni savet za visoko obrazovanje*) regarding professional questions. The Committee established a higher educational development program, formulated the criteria and standards of accreditation as well as planned the policy of financing and higher education enrolment. The guide for the ECTS system was introduced in December 2002. The voluntary evolution of the higher education institutions also started (Marinković–Nedučin, Lažetić 2002). In order to facilitate this process, the Serbian ENIC Center, the electronic informational network system was established in 2001. All university faculties and colleges had to introduce the new credit system from the academic year of 2006/2007 onwards. The higher education competences can be divided into three groups:

⁷ The examination that precedes the delivery of licenses.

⁸ The Serbian University Educational Council (its current name is Higher Educational Council) made a decision on 13 Jan 2003 about the foundation of the Higher Educational Accreditation Committee. This committee formulated the procedure of the accreditation process, formed its requirements, and handed it over to the Council (*Uputstva i kriterijumi za akreditaciju visokog obrazovanja*, AAOM, Belgrade, September 2004).

1. The state establishes, has the right to deliver accreditations, draws together or ceases institutions, finances, controls, recognizes quality and qualifications and guarantees rights.
2. The higher educational institution establishes workplaces, admits students, prescribes the expectations of qualification programs, gives out degrees and further educates. (Graph 1 shows the qualifications that can be achieved in higher education.)
3. Organizations of experts: Higher Educational National Council, Higher Educational Accreditation Committee and the so-called Conferences (Conferences of Serbian Universities, Conference of Academia and Professional Studies and Conference of Students⁹). The conferences are the partners of the Higher Educational National Council. They consult regularly and discuss the higher educational reform steps, the recommendations of the ministry.

The Serbian Parliament passed the new higher educational law in August 2005. The law obliges the introduction of the qualification comprising two cycles (3-5 years), the flexible curriculum, the credit system, the diploma supplement, the double degrees. The accreditation agency for degree registration was established; the exterior quality assurance and the more effective control of private universities were also ensured.

The corporative higher educational model has been introduced in Serbia (instead of the market-oriented civil service model). Within the universities there are department centers (*odsek* – the collaboration of several departments with the purpose of inter- and multidisciplinary program cooperation). Above these, there are the faculties, the union of the departments cooperating with the other organizational units (libraries, computer centers, laboratories, workshops, innovational centers, students' residences, canteens).

⁹ In Serbian: Konferencija univerziteta, Konferencija akademija strukovnih studija and Studentske konferencije.

Table 1: The levels of higher education and their conditions

18-19 years old	Candidates (4-year secondary school, advanced level of school leaving exam, entrance or ability exam)		
1 st level of higher education (21-23 years old)	Bachelor Basic academic studies 180-240 ECTS		Bachelor professional studies 180 ECTS
2 nd level of higher education (23-24 years old)	Post gradual studies – Master qualifications 60-120 ECTS	Academic studies + specialization 60 ECTS	Professional studies + specialization 60 ECTS
3 rd level of higher education (26-28 years old)	Ph.D. qualification – Doctoral degree 180 ECTS (plus the previously achieved 300 ECTS points)		

The Minister of Education prepared the report for the European minister conference at the end of the year 2006 (Bologna process, Serbian National Report 2006). According to its evaluation since the new higher educational law came into force (10 September 2005) significant progress can be noted regarding the higher educational reforms. He considered the formulation of the standards for the accreditation of higher educational institutions and the standards of quality assurance (20 October 2006) to be the most crucial leaps forward. In December of the same year the applications for accreditation of higher educational institutions could be handed over (15 Dec 2006).¹⁰ The Higher Educational Accreditation Committee is separately operating from the National Higher Educa-

¹⁰At that time, there were approximately 100,000 students at Serbian higher educational institutions (to be more specific 98,259 students at state and private faculties in the academic year of 2006/07). Their majority, 58%, participated in bachelor studies (57,359 students), 11% of them in post-graduate studies (master) (10,860 students, students who repeated the academic year were not included). 30,040 students studied at state and private colleges (that are separated from universities), which are 31% of the total number of students.

tional Council. The committee's president is Slobodan Arsenijević, who presented the first accreditation decisions on 3 May 2007. So far 79 decisions have been made: 33 faculties received accreditation, 27 cannot admit new students.

The major problem of the latter faculties is the lack of basic requirements, such as the adequate qualification of staff members (full-time employed professors), the lack of classrooms and facilities, quality of curriculum. 18 institutions were called upon to supply certain documents, their accreditation will be decided upon later. Approximately 200 faculties' documents have to be looked over and the committee had to decide upon their accreditation until 27 June 2009. Between 2007 and 2009 230 institutions were evaluated, 1681 programs from 2010.

The Serbian higher educational reform will enter this phase, when it has the opportunity to have open international control. Experts/professors with international reputation are the members of the Higher Educational Accreditation Committee. The Minister of Education found the participation of the Committee important in two international organizations (Bologna process, Serbian national report 2006). The FAB joined the *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA) and *International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (INQAAHE) in 2006. In Serbia there are five types of higher educational institutions:

1. „*Univerzitet*” – universities are independent higher educational institutions that unify education and research as well as deal with a complete range of activities: offer education in at least three branches of science and three majors on three levels of higher education.
2. „*Fakultet, umetnička akademija u sastavu univerziteta*” – faculties and art academies within universities that offer bachelor, specialization, master and PhD qualifications within their branches of science.

3. „*Akademija strukovnih studija*” – the academy of professional studies (often called high-college), educational and research institution that has at least five majors in at least three branches of science on bachelor and specialization levels.
4. „*Visoka škola*” – college academic bachelor and specialization levels of education in one or more majors.
5. “*Visoka škola strukovnih škola*” – professional college, professional bachelor and specialization levels of education in one or more branches of science.

The law recognizes two-level education: the academic studies that prepare students to broaden and apply their scientific and professional knowledge as well as enable them to produce artistic and other kinds of products and offer professional studies that prepare students for engaging in work processes as well as applying their knowledge and skills. The bachelor studies (BA) last 3-4 years, which is followed by the master studies (MS) and doctoral (PhD) studies. The latter two levels last 2 and 3 years respectively. The European credit system has also been implemented. During the bachelor studies 180-240 credit points can be collected (in the first year 60 points, which means 40 hours per/a week in the labour market). Subjects are taught for one semester, knowledge is continuously assessed and possibly supported by practical activities.

In Serbia, there are seven state and twelve private universities. The state ones are: two in Belgrade, one in Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar and the affiliated University of Priština in Sremska Mitrovica. The private universities that have already received accreditation: Braća Karić in Belgrade, European, Megatraned, Singidunum and Union University and Economic Academy in Novi Sad. The number of faculties that received accreditation in four-month cycles is 180 (their majority are state faculties, the rest are private – a few of them do not belong to any university). The number of colleges is 49 state and 31 private ones – their accreditation is in process.

Accreditation had four cycles in Serbia during the last two years. Out of 129 institutions 110 received accreditation, eleven were asked to supply certain documents, eight were rejected. In total out of 1181 programs, 968 received accreditation, 163 required completion and 50 were rejected. The fifth cycle of the accreditation process was running in 2011 (273 studies of 29 institutions are expected to be evaluated) (the president of the Accreditation Committee is Vera Vujičić).¹¹

The results of the accreditation cycles where the Bologna principles have been implemented so far:

- Academic studies - eleven universities (seven + four); 105 faculties, three professional colleges, in which there are 1049 studies (bachelor, master and PhD courses). The number of first year students is 60,000.
- Professional studies - 65 professional colleges received accreditation with 289 major programs (bachelor level and specialization). The number of first-year students is 20,000.

The task of the Minister of Education is to engage in the implementation of the Bologna process and the reform of the system of the higher educational institution, especially in case of the private faculties and colleges. Thus, a committee has been established (*Committee for the Monitoring of Implementation of the Law on Higher Education*) whose task it is to follow the application of the higher educational law. Entrance exams are compulsory at every university and college except when the advanced- level school-leaving examination is recognized. The required points are made up of the secondary school results (50%) and the entrance exam (50%).

The harmonization of the entrance exam process with the European standards has started, but in the future a lot of attention has to be paid to it. The National Qualifications Framework has

¹¹ <http://www.mp.gov.rs/ustanove/visoke.php>, accessed 01/03/2011.

been established within the authority of the ministry, which has been theoretically harmonized with the requirements and ideas of the representatives of employers, trade unions and the Ministry of Economy.

Education is operated accordingly to the Bologna system at the University of Belgrade and at Novi Sad. There are separate accredited majors on graduate and post-graduate levels. The Universities of Niš and Kragujevac have fulfilled the Bologna standards to 80%, the one in Priština (in Kosovska Mitrovica)¹² only 50%. The conditions of crossing between the levels of education and majors are still unsolved since students have been required to pass several equivalency exams in order to change studies especially in the cases of different universities. This situation has somewhat been eased by the fact that since 2007 universities have been obliged to provide their diploma supplements in Serbian as well as English.

From the practice of the university sphere

The quota of students at state universities is determined by the Serbian Ministry of Education (*Ministarstvo prosvete*) each year.

In Serbia¹³ according to the statistics of 1990 there were 117,212 students, while in 2006 this number doubled (238,710). The number of graduates in 1990 was 15,368, while in 2006 it was 29,406.

¹² The former University of Priština has split into two: the one with Albanian interests remained in Priština and the one with Serbian interests moved to Kosovka Mitrovica (still on the territory of Kosovo).

¹³ The number of Serbia's population (not including Kosovo) according to the census of 2002: 7 498 001.

Table 2: The number of students at universities in Serbia (2010)

No.	Name of university in Serbian	State or private university	Number of students (rounded or estimated)	Year of foundation (number of faculties)
1	Univerzitet u Beogradu	S	89,800	1905 (31)
2	Univerzitet u Novom Sadu	S	43,200	1960 (14=9+5)
3	Univerzitet u Nišu	S	26,270	1965 (11+2)
4	Megatrend Univerzitet	P	5,000	2000 (5+2)
5	Univerzitet u Kragujevcu	S	14,160	1976 (11)
6	Univerzitet u Prištini (Kosovska Mitrovica)	S	9,300	1969 (10)
7	Univerzitet Singidunum	P	4,200	2005 (7+1+2)
8	Univerzitet Alfa (Braća Karić)	P	5,000	1993 (6+1)
9	Univerzitet Union Beograd	P – accreditation in process	2,500	2005 (7+1)
10	Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu	S	1,200 (estimation)	1973 (4)
11	Evropski univerzitet	P – accreditation in process	650	2000 (5+1)

Table 2 (continued): The number of students at universities in Serbia (2010)

No.	Name of university in Serbian	State or private university	Number of students (rounded or estimated)	Year of foundation (number of faculties)
12	Univerzitet u Novom Pazaru	S	1,500	2006 (3)
13	Internacionalni Univerzitet u Novom Pazaru	P – accreditation in process	1,000 (estimation)	2003 (5)
14	Akademija lepih umetnosti	P	500 (estimation)	1997
15	Privredna akademija Novi Sad	P	4,000	2000 (6+1)
16	Univerzitet Educons Sremska Kamenica	P – accreditation in process	1,715	2008 (5)
17	Univerzitet Metropolitan Beograd	P	1,300	2005 (4)
	Total		207,000	

Source: <http://www.studentskismet.com/studije.php>, accessed 01/03/2011.

It is a widespread opinion that the higher education reforms and the accreditation are the most developed at the University of Novi Sad in comparison to other Serbian universities. In the academic year of 2009/2010 the University of Novi Sad had 43,414 students at bachelor level of education.¹⁴ 26,985 students (62.12%) studied on the university's budget, while 16,455 (37.88%) paid a tuition fee. As for the master level, 2,378 students were studying and 954 students were participating in doctoral courses (most of them paid for their doctoral education). In the academic year of 2008/2009 4,500

¹⁴ 9,975 students were admitted to the professional colleges founded by the Province in the academic year of 2009/2010. But in order to count the total number of students, one needs to add the number of students who study at private universities.

students graduated. On the basis of the previous programs and laws the average number of years of studies was 7.37. The number of years spent in education has decreased with the introduction of the Bologna system. According to my estimations, in 1990 one third of youths (who were at an age for potentially participating in tertiary education) attended tertiary education, but this number grew until 2010 since the chances of employment after secondary school graduation decreased. The statutes of the University of Novi Sad that contained the new structural and functional principles were passed on third October 2006. By this the University has almost completely accommodated the objectives of the Bologna Declarations and the recommendations of later conferences as well as Serbian higher educational law which was passed in 2005. The Inter Accreditation Committee of the University prepared an annual plan, and on the basis of this each applicant attended. The committee of four members¹⁵ checked work conditions, the execution of the educational objectives and formulated the evaluative report. The basic activity of the university comprises higher education, adult education (LLL), research development, art production, library and publishing activities as well as providing information.

The University provides education in five fields¹⁶ and on three levels. The first level is basic academic and basic studies, the second level is academic studies with a degree in master courses – specialized academic and professional studies–, the third level is doctoral academic studies. 14 faculties (legal entities and without status, as well),¹⁷ some centers, departments, professional services, libraries, information centers, students' residences, canteens belong to the university. Faculties of legal entity have at least three majors

¹⁵ Its members are professional experts, two professors from two other universities, one foreign university professor with voting rights, and a member of the Inter Accreditation Committee of the University also with voting rights.

¹⁶ Natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and arts, medical sciences, technical-technological sciences, arts, as well as the multidisciplinary majors of the above mentioned.

¹⁷ The decision-making organizations of the faculties are: Faculty Council, Dean, Council of Studies, Council of Elections/Appointments, University Parliament.

that have received accreditation and three levels of education. The Faculties of the University of Novi Sad are:

1. Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad,
2. Faculty of Agriculture in Novi Sad,
3. Faculty of Law in Novi Sad,
4. Faculty of Technology in Novi Sad,
5. Faculty of Economics in Subotica,
6. Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad,
7. Faculty of Medicine in Novi Sad,
8. Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad,
9. Academy of Arts in Novi Sad,
10. Faculty of Civil Engineering in Subotica,
11. "Mihajlo Pupin" Technical Faculty in Zrenjanin,
12. Faculty of Sport and Physical Education in Novi Sad,
13. Faculty of Education in Sombor,
14. Hungarian Language Teachers' Training Faculty in Subotica.

The University Council, the main decision-making organization of the university, has standing committees: Strategy Developmental Committee, Campus Developmental Committee, Statutes Committee, Financial Committee, Entrepreneur Committee and Investment Committee. The Senate which is subordinate to the University Council is directed by the rector. Its members are 25 full university professors, the rector, three vice-rectors, 14 deans, the coordinators of centers and professional advisors of 5 branches of science). The Senate's role is decision-making upon questions regarding education programs, majors, degrees, appointment of professors and quality assurance. Ethical issues are also dealt with by the Senate. The transfer of credit points, the organization of mutual majors, correspondence education and continuous education fall within the competence of the Senate and the professional services of the university. The concept of self-evaluation is new to the system of qual-

ity assurance which comprises the same unified instructions. However, each faculty has to set up their own professional committee.

The students

The majority of students support higher educational reforms. Those students who do not enter university for the purpose of studying, who quickly wish to enter the labour market or who use education to avoid unemployment are not supporting the new educational regulations. The attitudes of students can be analyzed from two aspects: through the role and operation of the student Union and through the employment rate of newly graduated students (which is an important aspect of the faculties' system of quality assurance). Student participation is working relatively well in Serbia. Organizations for the protection of student interests, the so-called student parliaments have existed for several years. For instance, the one in Novi Sad has 31 members. Based on its number of students, each faculty has at least one student representative in the parliament. Students: the formation of unified educational standards, the introduction of the credit system, Student forms the 20% of the university senates. Students have a say in the following matters: assurance, strategic development, interdisciplinary programs, the appointment of professors, establishment of international relationships, investments, and flow of information and use of libraries. They are not directly elected into the Accreditation Committee, but are represented by electors on the intervention of the National Higher Educational Council.

From the academic year of 2006/2007 onwards, each faculty (with a few exceptions) operates on the basis of the recommendations of the Bologna Declarations and the conferences following them. To be more specific:

- Students can be admitted to university on the basis of their entrance exams and ranking, either on the expenses of the univer-

sity or their own expenses (or as a guest student for two semesters from another university);

- one semester (15 weeks) and tri-semester (10 weeks) subjects that can be compulsory, compulsorily optional and optional;
- knowledge assessment is continuous (tests, exams, seminar papers, oral exams);
- the possibility of academic year repetition has stopped in 2006 for the reason that subjects that were taken up but not fulfilled can be repeated.

As a result of the visa compulsion Serbia was highly restricted in terms of international student mobility. In 2009 the visa compulsion in the EU states ended, but the faculties did not join the student exchange program dynamically. In the academic year of 2009/2010 only a few hundred foreign students studied in Serbia, 70 students thanks to the Ministry of Education. In 2010/2011 approximately 700 foreigners (from Austria, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy) studied in Serbia, mostly at the Faculty of Arts. Students and their parents have very little influence on the system of higher education. Students are mostly interested in the value of their degrees in the labour market.

The acceptance of the newly graduate's degrees on the labour market

The labour market requirements concerning professional knowledge have changed recently as a result of economic changes in Vojvodina. The labour market expects practical and flexible knowledge which implies the preference for multidisciplinary qualification. The demand for continuous retraining has appeared. The generation of 15- to 25-years-olds comprises the 20-27% of the total number of the unemployment. Their majority is women. Approxi-

mately 98% of the young unemployed are between the ages of 19 to 25. Their qualification is secondary school level. Changes within the labour market give an advantage to those with a degree. Unemployment and especially mobility statistics obviously show the prestige increase of the higher educational qualification, which further strengthens youngster's willingness to study (Gábrity Molnár 2006, 103-129). Nowadays it is almost impossible to immediately find employment with a secondary school qualification. Thus, Hungarian youngsters in Vojvodina are pessimistic about their labour market prospects. According to our data half of the respondents would wish to further educate themselves, mostly those who live in towns. Secondary school students are thinking of entering education in economics, technology, and computer sciences. As a second option students reported the possibility of studying pedagogy or at the faculty of arts. Plans to study natural sciences, agriculture or law are rare, most probably because there is no education of the above mentioned fields of sciences in Hungarian. As results of modernization new majors have been introduced, such as economics, technology, and computer sciences. Youngsters would like to have education in their mother tongue in some justified labour market oriented majors: pedagogy, economics, gardening, engineering (Gábrity Molnár 2006, 103-104).

The majority of newly graduated believe that they will shortly find employment, but 41% of them think it will take years till they find an appropriate job. The youngsters of Vojvodina follow the model of the youngsters of their region in the field of higher education and job search and not the Hungarian or European models. Regarding the professional and workplace choice, it is the Serbian/regional labour market forces that dominate and not the European norms. The majority of youngsters do not find employment in their own profession. Lacking workplace opportunities they accept various other jobs (Szlávitý 2003, 265-270). For better work opportunities youngsters are willing to further educate themselves, ac-

quire new skills, learn new languages or even go abroad.¹⁸ According to the answers of youngsters from Vojvodina (on the basis of the interviews and the focus group) the professions of high prestige are the following (in order) manager, bank/financial worker, marketing worker, IT specialist, software designer, entrepreneur, economist, accountant, lawyer, university professor, expert on logistics, architect engineer, medical specialist. The professions that are in demand in the region are the following: economist-manager, IT specialist, expert on logistics, architect, engineer, financial expert, marketing expert, advertisement expert, medical specialist, dentist, interpreter, tourism expert (tourism craftsman), architect, decorator, bricklayer, textile labourer. Professions that are not in demand in the region are pedagogue (especially kindergarten teacher and teacher), metal processing labourer, hair-dresser, chemist, chauffeur, gardener, arts majors (except psychology and English majors), trader, shop assistant (Gábrity Molnár 2007, 160).

Only a few faculties follow the career of their students. Currently only a few representative researches are running: The Faculty of Architecture as well as the Faculty of Law in Kragujevac follow the future of their three-year bachelor graduates, so do the Faculties of Law and of Technology in Novi Sad. This task has to be implemented into the quality of assurance of each faculty (Bologna process, Serbian National Report 2006, 8).

The professors

The quality of staff members' work is evaluated in evolving foreign and domestic experts on the basis of the direction of the Ministry of

¹⁸ Youngsters who study in Hungary chose to do so in order to ensure their future („survival strategy”), mostly for financial reasons, but Hungary's European Union accession has also played a role in the process of decision-making. The majority of unemployed Hungarian youngsters in Vojvodina are willing to wait for an appropriate workplace 1-2 years. Most of them take up odd jobs. They believe the main reason of unemployment is their lack of connections.

Education. The National Higher Educational Council passed the regulations related to the standards of quality assurance and self-evaluation of higher educational institutions on 20 October 2006. Professors who teach abroad and foreign professors who teach in Serbia participate in the process of evaluation as professional advisors. The number of guest professors is not high (94 professors from 28 countries in 2007), but as a result of the foreign policy softening (broader opening, visa policies) hopefully professor and student mobility will accelerate in the future. The statute of the University of Novi Sad follows the regulations of the new law, thus all professors need to have PhD qualifications. The appointment of professors is possible only with labour relations and falls into the authority of the National Higher Educational Council that operates parallel to the Serbian government.

- re-electable titles:
 - associate professor in the field of education, scientific fellow worker in the field of research;
 - associate professor (those associate professors who have written textbooks and work as mentors on master level) as well as scientific fellow worker in the field of research;
- permanent titles: full professor and scientific advisor;
- temporary titles: professors of foreign languages, physical education and art subjects, temporarily, they can be lecturers and main lecturers and, as a result of the transition situation (till colleges exist), they can be teaching professional subjects as well;
- other appointments: associate professor or assistant (or research fellow) who is participating in doctoral education.

4,261 employees worked at the University of Novi Sad in 2009 (1,690 were professors, 1,121 associate professors, 206 researchers, 1,244 other employees).

The political sphere

No political party can be active at any university, and political points of view cannot be expressed. Recently several professors have decided to occupy a political position or used to occupy state positions and at the same time several former politicians also prefer occupying professor positions. Individuals known as professors bring about their academic prestige while political prestige can also be beneficial in acquiring a state position. Government circles and university oligarchy fight their everyday battles, the interests of the profession and the state often oppose each other. Education in Serbia rarely gives rise to direct political conflicts. Minority education in their mother tongues has, however, caused conflict between parties. The problem of education in the native languages of Hungarians in Vojvodina, Bosnians in Sandzak and Romain general has already been raised. In the debates of the Provincial Parliament of Vojvodina, for instance, the foundation of the Hungarian talent-management secondary grammar school (Subotica and Senta) and the Hungarian Teacher Training Faculty (Subotica) were initiated by the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (between 2002-2006). The National Council has been paying attention to minority education from 2010 onwards.¹⁹ The Hungarian National Council²⁰ today is continuously raising the issue of educational institutions of Hungarian interest in Vojvodina.²¹

¹⁹ Zakon o nacionalnim savetima nacionalnih manjina, je donela Narodna skupština Republike Srbije na sednici Jedanaestog vanrednog zasedanja 31. Augusta 2009. ("Službeni glasnik RS", No. 72/2009). See the second paragraph of the law: „National minorities elect their own national councils in the Republic of Serbia in order to realize their rights to culture, education, information and official language and writing within their municipalities.“ This has been completed by the Provincial Parliament of Vojvodina, which passed its decision about the National Community Council on 23 March 2010.

²⁰ www.mnt.org.rs, accessed 01/03/2011.

²¹ Such issues are: Is there any need for an exclusively Hungarian university in Vojvodina? Or should there be a multiethnic university in Subotica?

Lifelong learning

Adult education has a long tradition in Serbia; however its history does not show a balanced development. Today adult education does not reflect social interests, there are no improvements whatsoever, thus significant social or economic changes cannot be achieved at all. The National Employment Service is the only state organization that – more-or-less regularly – has been paying attention to adult education as its organizer, executor and financial supporter. In most cases, however, the qualification programs do not realize the realistic labour market needs. Other adult educational institutions are obliged to pay taxes since the state regards them as sources of income. These institutions operate without norms, standards and system of requirements, which results in a rather chaotic and unprofessional situation. Currently the following institutions deal with the realization of adult education with varying intensity and partly contribute to the realization of the LLL program: labour, national and free universities, cultural centers, the above already mentioned National Employment Service, the educational departments of enterprises, private (educational) institutions, education centers, foundations, and civil organizations with educational profiles, scientific and professional institutions, professional associations, special training forms that the army and military require, institutions that provide social care for the elderly, churches, local and international media, museums, libraries, reading rooms, cinemas (which currently provide education), art galleries, recreational centers, correctional institutions and council housing.

There are three basic laws that regulate education in Serbia: the *Law on primary education and child-rearing* (2003 and 2004), the *Law on secondary schools* (2003 and 2005), and the *Law on higher education* (2005). There is no separate law regulating adult education, but strategic plans already exist. The Serbian government accepted the document entitled the *Strategic development of adult*

education in Serbia on 28 December 2006.²² It formulated the actions to be undertaken. This document of 17 pages provides principles and developmental objectives in accordance with the international declarations.²³ Adult education would be transformed relying on the principle of Lifelong Learning. Its objective is the further improvement of human resources for social and economic development. The new strategy completes previous governmental decisions, such as *The strategy of employment between 2005 and 2010*, *The strategy of small and medium-size entrepreneurship development between 2003 and 2008*, *Program for poverty reduction (2003)*, *Strategy of European Union accession (2005)*, *Development of social protection (2005)* and *National strategy about ageing between 2006-2015*.

Adult education concerns those who are older than 18 and have no student status at any institution. Adult education focuses mostly on two fields: professional education (first occupation or correction of a previously failed occupation, retraining, and further training) and the acquisition of basic competences. The governmental decision recognizes the following forms of education:

- Formal educational subsystem or formal education: part of the school system that received accreditation by the state (from primary school to post-graduate studies); when studies have been finished and a degree or certificate has been provided, the institution's qualification is recognized. Its institutions are:
 - the schools of basic adult education,
 - secondary schools for youngsters (state and private),
 - colleges and universities (state and private).

²² „Strategija razvoja obrazovanja odraslih u Republici Srbiji”, (Službeni glasnik RS br. 55/05, modified 75/05), 28 December 2006. The decision relies on earlier documents regarding adult education: „Strateški pravci u razvoju obrazovanja odraslih, Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta Republike Srbije”, Beograd, 2002, www.mps.sr.gov.yu, accessed 01.03.2011.

²³ The governmental decision relies on six international declarations or underlying principles. These are the Hamburg Declarations of Adult Education (1977), memorandum about LLL of the European Committee (2000), Dakar Frameworks (2000), The European region of LLL (2001), Copenhagen Declarations (2002) and the Century of knowledge for the maintenance of Development (UN-UNESCO, Bonn – 2005)

- Non-formal educational subsystems or non-formal education: schools that do not receive financial support by the state, the institutions organize and execute the programs if they have accreditation.
- General and professional education: school programs provide general or professional knowledge, the latter for instance is provided by secondary vocational schools and by programs demanded by the labour market.
- Initiating education: each program that precedes the first workplace.
- Continuous learning: those programs that are required after entering into a first workplace. Its aim is to develop knowledge, skills and new competences.
- Ordinary or non-ordinary education: Adult education was traditionally organized on a regular basis, mostly during weekends and in the afternoons/evenings. Lately, thanks to the wide range of possibilities offered by distance learning, it is not tied to time: Students – on the basis of the qualification packages– study on their own and, if it is required, they might consult a tutor, participate in the obligatory and optional consultations and practices, accomplish fulfilling the tasks and, finally, the final exam.

According to the ideas of the government out of various institutions that deal with adult education the following ones can be legalized: state primary schools, secondary schools and their centers, higher educational institutions and their centers, national, free universities, companies and economic organizations, associations, cultural institutions, private educational organizations, professional companies. The Serbian Government has developed four basic objectives, which will serve as basis for future laws.²⁴

²⁴ The decisions made so far: (1) Strategija razvoja stručnog obrazovanja u Republici Srbiji objavljen Službeni glasnik RS No. 55/05, modified 71/05) and the (2) Strategija razvoja obrazovanja odraslih u

1. The effective participation of the social partners of interest in adult education requires social dialogue. To achieve this the following tasks need to be accomplished:
 - Partnership agreements have to be signed concerning professional qualifications among the government, employers and employees on local and state levels. The division of tasks and responsibilities in order to improve the presently chaotic state of the higher education.
 - The establishment of educational councils for professional and further education with the participation of government, trade union, and employer representatives.
 - For the purpose of human resources development municipality councils were formed, whose members are representatives of the government, trade unions, employers, professional associations, educational institutions and research centers. Their basic tasks are to survey the educational demands and initiate processes, providing information and recommending financial models.
2. The distribution and redefinition of ministry authorities regarding higher education which requires the cooperation of 3 ministries: Ministries of Education, Employment, Labour, Social Policy and Finances. Work teams between ministries and permanent committees need to be established. The tasks in this area are the following:
 - to increase the capacity of adult education and raise the level of responsibility;
 - to create financial models and mechanisms related to adult educational programs;
 - to control institutions which provide adult education on the basis of unified standards;

3. The provision of access to adult education programs with the following tasks:
 - to organize basic education for adults;
 - to develop professional and further educational programs.
4. Increasing the capacity of adult education and quality assurance:
 - passing the law of adult education as soon as possible;
 - forming a system for the financing of adult education;
 - formulating standards of education and qualifications;
 - introducing systems of accreditation and certification;
 - formulating the advising system;
 - establishing a system of quality assurance programs.

According to the ideas of the government the potential subjects of adult education are those who do not have adequate knowledge and competence for finding employment in the labour market: illiteracy, lack of qualifications. It is important to ensure the possibility of professional qualification beyond the basic educational level. Special attention is paid to such disadvantaged groups as women, national minorities (Romani), rural inhabitants. Before organizing adult education the survey of local and regional demands is considered crucial and, of course, the accommodation of these demands. On the basis of governmental plans, the state, municipalities, (entrepreneurs) private capital, domestic and international organizations should participate in the financial matters of the adult education. The government aims to support employment programs from budget resources and also plans to guarantee tax discharge or tax reduction for those who invest in retraining and further education or in the field of education. Finally, the establishment of funds is also planned.

The state of the reform – results

Launching Bologna process is a higher education policy decision, part of the change in regime. The Serbian Ministry of Education tries to end the chaotic situation by centralizing and controlling in spite of the strength of the state faculties and private institutions. The reform process is however slow and not free from difficulties. Referring to the Bologna process enables the academic community to have such reforms accepted by the government, which had not been able to initiate them, since it has been occupied with “more crucial issues” concerning the country such as Kosovo. Thus the Bologna process is not only the organizational restructuring of the higher education but also the new higher education concept that forces the government to pass new laws related to higher education.

The higher educational policy of Serbia is characterized by the triangular relationship of the government, the university and the users during the last five years. The Serbian state has not been able to outgrow its centralized ambitions since the Milosevic era, which in practice means Belgrade has centralized higher education. However, the system of self-government (established in the Tito era) is still strong because university circles and students traditionally have a say in higher educational matters and claim their freedom of opinion.

The government crisis in the first half of 2007 prevented the realization of the operative programs related to the adult educational strategic development. The higher educational reforms are also urgent since the Conference of London has set more tasks. The action program that had been planned for May 2007 was also late, but the modification of the law of 2005 was finished by 2010.²⁵ In the following two years thus new higher educational laws were expected to be passed. The accreditation of state and private uni-

²⁵ <http://www.mp.gov.rs>, accessed 01.03.2011.

versities as well as faculties started in 2007 and finished on 27 June 2009. The accreditation of independent colleges is in progress.²⁶

Conclusion

The start of the Bologna process in Serbia was a higher education policy decision, which was part of the general change of regime. The higher educational reform ambitions in Serbia strengthened in 2001 thanks to the reform group that belonged to the new government (followed by the one after Milošević). The government still aims to carry out the higher educational regulations and integrate into the international university system as soon as possible. The Ministry of Education tries to push its ideas through, even against the quite strong and independent state faculties and private institutions. However, the development of the reform is slow and not problem-free. Institutional and central ideas do not always match. Regional differences can also be found: The capital is more advanced regarding the reform processes in comparison with Vojvodina. Higher education's value system and financial support have significantly deteriorated. According to intellectuals' opinions the educational reform is politically dependent, because decisions depend on the ruling party or the party the minister belongs to. Conservative circles that usually consist of elderly academics find it difficult to leave their habitual practices behind. The majority of students support the higher educational reforms. Students from the previous system would also like to join the new one, since they have realized advantages and the European perspectives. Those who do not enter university with the purpose of studying are not satisfied with the new educational regulations. They often support

²⁶ Until 3 May 2007 97 applications for college accreditation were judged: 33 received accreditation, while 27 were denied. 18 colleges were given a three-month extension to compensate for the missing documents (the report of Slobodan Arsenijević, the president of the Accreditation Council – 27 June 2007).

university demonstrations and movements against the government to mitigate the Bologna educational quality assurance or to avoid paying tuition fees.

In order to achieve the relatively quick and successful changes of higher education in Serbia the introduction of the accreditation system on the basis of European norms is absolutely necessary (2005). A successful selection of institutions can be achieved by the recognition of each institution's foundations, majors and programs as well as by quality recognition. The introduction of accreditation also brings about the self-definition of the institutions and their internal evaluation. The state and private faculties will also adapt to the demands of the labour market, and the usefulness of their degrees will automatically rank the universities. Following this, closing up to international educational institutions can be achieved (according to plan by 2010, however it has not been accomplished so far). The bodies established by the government have a major influence in the accreditation process. The autonomy of the universities can be protected by (1) conferences that can be founded between the government and the institutions where discussing debates is possible, (2) the Higher Education Accreditation Committee whose members are mostly university professors, but no macroeconomists or financial experts.

Optimistic statements dominate the internal evaluations of the accreditation organization by referring to quality assurance and rationalization. Quality as an objective means the following for them: higher educational level of quality (that corresponds with the requirements of the labour market), efficiency (high points on entrance levels, the aggravation of the criteria of professor appointment regarding their competences), more efficient qualification by increasing the material and non-material costs in order to decrease the average time of education and raise the number of graduates).

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The Implementation of the Bologna Reform Policies in Slovakia

Béla László

“The Bologna process is named after the Bologna Declaration. The primary goal of the accords is the coordination and harmonization of the various European higher education systems without losing their colourful diversity and individual features, thereby making European higher education even more attractive for students and scholars from all over the world. The Bologna Declaration aims to create a European higher education Area by 2010” (Sprievodca 2006, 8). The aim of this study is manifold. Firstly, we will try to present the formation of the Slovakian nation state, the national higher education, their particularities and main agents, which all provided the context for the Bologna policies. Secondly, in the main part of this study, there will be shown the implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration and the follow-up conferences. In addition, there will also be discussed the strategic goals of Slovakian higher education policy, the challenges, the success and failures in their introduction.

The Pre-Bologna state of Slovak higher education

Independent Slovakia was established merely 18 years ago, but the origins of its higher education system date back to the 1920s. After the World War 1 a new country was formed on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Until the foundation of the Republic of Slovakia in 1993 Slovak higher education had been an integral part of the uniform Czechoslovakian system, which as László (2008: 46) argues “was neither dual nor linear in structure”.

This means that formally there was a uniform higher education system, where the higher education institutions and their degrees were equal. The law does not make distinctions between university and non-university institutions, but functionally the contours of a binary system can clearly be observed. The system has been dominated by the universities and university-level institutions (academies, institutes), which are substituted by specialized, small vocationally-oriented institutions (*vysoká škola*) in such study areas as law, management and business or international relations. The study time varies from four to six years.

The foundations of this basically new system were laid on 1 July 1990 with the new Higher Education Act of 172/1990 (*Zákon o vysokých školách*). From then on, higher education studies could be pursued on different levels (*Zákon 1990, § 21*)¹. “Although the act itself gives priority to parallel courses, it does not exclude the linear system consisting of various phases” (Laszló 2006: 117). The new law has created the basis for previously unknown Bachelor programs, which were mainly organized on a tuition-fee arrangement for part-time students. In the wake of transition the university network started to expand, and there were established new universities and faculties in the existing ones. As one can observe, the massification was channelled toward the university sector. This sector experienced the academic drift phenomena: several changes in the names of the institutions (e.g. from academies or institutes to universities). This symbolic process was followed by the political strengthening by means of the laws. In the transition period one main social-political trend marked the Slovakian higher education system: the massification and continuous expansion of institutional networks. The system, in tune with other Central European coun-

¹ Higher educational institutions can award diplomas or bachelors' (Bc.) degrees. Students finishing their studies can be awarded the following academic titles: magister (Mgr) degree at universities, theological, artistic institutions; engineering (*inžinier* [Ing.]) degree at technical, economic and agronomical institutions; general practitioner (*doktor všeobecnej medicíny* [MUDr.]) at medical schools, or veterinary (*doktor veterinárnej medicíny* [[MVDr.]) at veterinary schools. (László 2008, 52.)

tries, experienced a continuous increase in the number of students in higher education. Between 1992 and 2003 the number of students in Slovak higher education institutions rose from 64,311 to 136,922, which means that the number of students increased by more than 200 percent (213.9 percent, to be precise) (László 2008). However, the student/teacher ratio has remained imbalanced, since faculties have not expanded at the same speed as student numbers have increased, indeed, there has emerged a growing gap between them. Additionally, the students within distance learning programs have quadrupled. The institutions have been highly interested in these programs, because of low running costs and tuition fees (which represent a considerable amount of the institutional budget). The state subsidies have not followed the expansion and growing costs either, in fact, there has been a decrease in subsidies. During this period, Slovakian higher education began to introduce the credit system, however, this process was not well coordinated on the political-administrative level (lack of proper legal regulation). The design of the credit system has been influenced by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The institutional and faculty autonomy have affected the implementation, since there was a large diversity in credit practices until 2002.

In addition, universities initiated other curricular and structural innovations. For example there began an internal restructuring of study programs. The four-, five- or six-year higher education programs were divided into two subsequent periods: a basic studies phase (two or three years) and a main studies phase (two years), the former being completed by passing a comprehensive exam and required to enter the latter. Also called a “little final exam”, its results contribute to those of the actual final examination at the end of the whole course of studies (László 2008, 54). The first legislative enactment on higher education standards took effect in 1990, exactly at the same time when universities in Czechoslovakia were granted their autonomy. With the enactment 172/1990 (Law

172/0990) higher education accreditation was introduced. The accreditation board assesses quality by examining the feasibility of the different programs and departments and also evaluates faculties annually (László 2008, 48).

Intermediary organizations

The Ministry of Education is the main policy agent managing the implementation procedure regarding the Bologna process in Slovakia. The country's representatives have participated at the Bologna and follow-up conferences. They have signed all the relevant documents, starting with the Bologna Declaration, and all further suggestions and objectives were gradually incorporated into state laws and regulations. In addition, the representatives of the Conference of Rectors in Higher Education in Slovakia have taken part in the meetings organized by the European University Association and other organizations, which offer policy suggestions to the ministerial and inter-ministerial conferences.

The other main policy agent is the Bologna Follow-up Group, whose role is that of an intermediary between intergovernmental, supranational and national levels, especially through its national support teams. Several European associations and institutions dealing with higher education problems provide the Group with support and counsel.² The Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC) effectively supports the international cooperation and coordination of Slovak institutions in cultural and other spheres, especially with EU member states. At an international level, the programs of Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus-

² The Follow-up Group acquires support from the European University Association, the European Association of Institution in Higher Education (EURASHE), European Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), the Council of Europe, the UNESCO European Center for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Education International Pan-European Structure.

Mundus and Tempus are administered by SAAIC, which operates national offices for these programs specifically. The creation of a national Bologna support team to provide help to higher education institutions in their implementation of the Bologna process was suggested by the European Commission in 2004. The National Office of the Socrates/Erasmus programs was asked by the European Commission to support and administer the creation of a team and to present its projects before the Commission. In cooperation with the higher education section of the Ministry of Education, the Conference of Rectors and the Council of Higher Education Institutions, the National Office proposed the formation of a seven-member group of promoters (László 2008, 48-49). This national team provides help to higher education institutions regarding the implementation of the Bologna process in the following fields:

- quality assurance (full-time and part-time courses),
- forming a three-level education system,
- recognition of studies (ECTS, Diploma supplement),
- lifelong learning,
- creation of EHEA and a European research area,
- mobility in higher education,
- European dimensions in higher education (Sprievodca 2006, 23).

The legal basis for the implementation of the Bologna objectives in Slovakia were established in 2002. These regulations will be discussed in the following section of the article.

The Bologna process in Slovakia

The Bologna process proved to be a complex, multidimensional national and international process with a continuously expanding higher education policy agenda. Among the various participating agents there have emerged different interpretations of what the Bo-

logna process is. However, the most simple way to define the Bologna process is through its original objectives, called action lines: (1) the easily readable and comparable degrees, (2) the adoption of a system based on two main cycles, (3) the establishment of a system of credits, (4) the promotion of mobility, (5) the promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance, (6) the promotion of the European dimension in higher education. In the next section of this article, which is structured according to these policy objectives, our attempt is to present some reflections on their implementation in Slovakia.

Comparable and transparent degrees

The aim of easily comparable and readable degrees is to facilitate the recognition of studies among participating states, to support the intra-European mobility of labour, and to improve the attractiveness of European higher education systems. In Slovakia the recognition of documents on qualifications and studies is controlled in a comprehensive way by Law No. 477/2002 Z.z. and its modified version of 2004. The adoption of the act was inspired – among others – by the Lisbon Convention, the Bologna process and the demands for legal harmonization arising from Slovakia's new EU-membership. According to the act professional qualification was defined at four levels: (1) a higher education degree (*vysokoškolský diplom*), (2) a graduate degree (*absolventský diplom*), (3) a certificate of studies (*vysvedčenie*), and (4) a certificate of professional competencies (*osvedčenie o odbornej spôsobilosti*). The act differentiates between certificates on the basis of the question why they need to be recognized. The reasons for recognition may relate to further studies, academic goals, or employment. Consequently, the certificates verifying earlier study programs can be the following: (1) a diploma (*diplom*), (2) a certificate upon final examination

(*vysvedčenie o štátnej skúške*), or (3) a diploma supplement (*dodatok k diplomu*) (Zákon 2008, § 68, [1]). One of the most important means of achieving the aim of easily comparable and readable degrees is the introduction of the Diploma Supplement. According to the 2002 Higher Education Act, the Diploma Supplement contains the details of the study program results, and the diploma and its supplement are issued by a higher education institution (Zákon 2008, § 68, [4]). The details concerning the content of the diploma supplement and its uniform European form are regulated by ministerial order, according to which an English version is provided on request. The introduction of the Diploma Supplement was a slow process: *“Most Slovak institutions in higher education have not yet introduced the issuing of the diploma supplement. In 2004 only two institutions issued diploma supplements on their own, another six on request, two of which issued them for a fee. Eleven institutions intend to issue diploma supplements within the time interval set by the law”* (Sprievodca 2006, 31)

In 2004 legal regulations were introduced for the recognition of qualifications, certificates, and diplomas obtained abroad. The ministerial order on the process of the recognition of study documents mentioned in the 2002 law came into being. This provided recognition of diplomas and qualifications with an exact legal frame and procedure in accordance with European norms (Vyhláška 2005). The initial contradictory interpretation of the law changed in 2006, when the problems caused by indecisive administration and the professional and technical implementation of study programs and diploma recognition were solved. In order for Slovak qualifications and higher education degrees to be recognized abroad, however, the issuing of bilingual and English versions of diplomas, supplements and certificates has been prescribed by law. Since 2009 each higher education institution has also issued its certificates in English (László 2008, 51).

The two-cycle degree structure

The definition of the bachelor's degree as a basic European diploma and the outlining of its function has started a continuing debate among experts, academics and decision makers. The challenge of introduction consisted of several aspects of policy demands: (1) to introduce uniform Bachelor programs, (2) that are finished in three years, (3) during which time they prepare the students both for the labour market and further studies, thus (4) ensuring practical professional as well as general academic knowledge and competencies. In the European higher education this has proved to be a real innovation. There have been several attempts to describe the abilities and competencies needed for a Bachelor's degree (Barakonyi 2003: 86). The second cycle of one- or two-year-long studies ends with the acquisition of a Master's degree based on 60 to 120 credits. Here students also have to be in possession of clearly defined competencies. Just as with Bachelors' degrees numerous attempts have been made to define Master's degrees' competencies (Barakonyi 2003, 87).

One objective of the Bologna process is that graduate students should be in the possession of such professional knowledge – and practical experiences – that can be directly used in the realm of work. The acquisition of further qualifications and specializations are determined by the ever-changing needs of the labour-market as well as by individual abilities and ambitions. Individual needs, academic considerations and the expectations of the labour-market have to be satisfied by the content profile of bachelor and master studies. The three-cycle system in Slovakia was introduced by the 131/2002 Higher Education Law (*Zákon* 2002). In accordance with this law, (§ 50, [3]) the Ministry of Education has developed standards for higher education programs and a schedule of implementation, which are as follows: the institutions develop their study programs (taking into account the central standards), which will then

be accredited. Having completed these courses, students can consequently obtain higher education degrees. Among the 364 courses of studies in Slovakia in 2010 there were 165 ones leading to first-level, 165 to second-level, and 316 to third-level higher education degrees. This division does not take the contracted second-, and third-level programs into consideration, although it would be permitted by present laws (§ 53, [3]). Beside this, there are 117 programs where students can conduct their studies at all three levels.

By the end of 2005, 2 254 non-teacher-training (first-, second-, or contracted-level), 4 516 teacher-training³ and 1 033 third-level study programs had been accredited⁴. The number of study programs nowadays has remained the same. The reason for this high number is that each study program is counted separately on the basis of the particular institutions (faculties), study forms (full-time [*denné*], part-time [*externé*]), the level of the respective diplomas, and the lengths of studies. This system of counting the number of programs was set by law. (Výročná správa, 2006). The different levels are prescribed by Law 131/2002, based on the following principles:

- In bachelors' programs the goal of studies is (1) to master theoretical and practical knowledge at the current level of sciences and the arts. A further objective of the programs is that (2) graduates should be able to apply this knowledge for work or for further studies by making use of their abilities (Zákon 2008, § 52 [1]).
- In the second-phase programs the goal of studies is (1) to master theoretical and practical knowledge at the current level of sciences and the arts. A further objective of the programs is that (2) graduates be able to apply this knowledge in a creative

³ The 364 courses of studies are grouped under 27 branches of sciences that are further aligned to nine sciences.

⁴ Higher education institutions may offer only accredited study programs.

manner by making use of their abilities for work or for doctorate programs (Zákon 2008, § 53 [1]).

- In third-level programs the goal of studies is to master practical knowledge on the current level of sciences and the arts. In these programs students are expected to contribute to the universal human knowledge-base with their own academic or artistic achievements based on independent academic research or creative activity in the field of sciences, technology or the arts (Zákon 2008, § 54, [1]).

Since the 2005/6 academic year the three-cycle program is compulsory in Slovakian higher education, but with special ministerial authorization can be run undivided, in long-cycle (old) Master programs lasting four to six years. (Zákon 2008, § 53, [3]). At the present the system of study fields allows such study programmes at three fields of medicine and pharmacy. On the basis of earlier laws (Zákon 1990) third- to sixth-year students taking part in programs accredited until 2003 can complete their studies with a second-level degree. The Bologna-type, new kind of accreditation of most teacher-training programs was carried out in 2005, whereas that of the non-teacher-training ones had been completed a year earlier. The accreditation of the completely new, three-level programs started in 2003. The first bachelor-level students graduated in the 2006/7 academic year (László 2008, 52).

Even if the implementation of cycle programs is at an advanced stage in Slovakia, several unresolved problems remain. Although the restructuring of the higher education system has been accepted by professional and civil society, it is not regarded as a means or possibility to conceive the Bachelor programs as mass higher education and the two subsequent levels as semi-elite or elite higher education. Other issues are arising from the comprehensive function (preparing for the labour market or further studies) of the new bachelors. As the experiences and higher education data show the

bachelor's level is simply regarded as a precondition for further studies. On the basis of monitoring outcomes it is clear that most students do not intend to end their studies with a bachelor's degree and be employed immediately, unless this is financially favourable. Furthermore, even those who seem willing to start working with a bachelor's degree express the wish to continue with their studies later, which can be explained by the trend that the transfer from higher education to work is no longer a single act. Indeed, those employed may enter higher education at several points of their life.

In fact, the issues of entering the second phase of studies and of continuous learning are not being debated at universities or in society. The present, head quota-based system of state financing does not encourage the selection of students according to their knowledge and abilities when entering their second phase of studies. Worse, nothing is known about the proportion of first- and second-phase students. (Although 2008 is the first year to see huge numbers of bachelor graduates, earlier years also witnessed the graduation of first-level students). Determining the conditions of entering master-level programs appears to be a complex issue; formerly, from the point of view of their professional content, first- and second-level study programs used to be developed in a coherent way, where the second phase was completely based on the first one. In addition, they were always based on one or, at most, two courses of studies. The main point is whether the course of study or the study program will serve as a precondition for entering the second phase and which bachelor's degrees will be accepted by universities. The two-subject system of teacher-training programs renders this issue even more complicated (László 2008, 53).

In the academic year 2007/8, the reorganisation of higher education in Slovakia reached its first testing. First students of bachelor programmes pursuing their studies completely according to the Bologna process graduated in 2008. There were 34,421 such graduates altogether in Slovakia that year, 20,481 having studied

full-time and 13,940 part-time (Výročná správa 2009,35). In 2008, 91.7 percent of students enrolled in second level studies were graduates of the same year (Výročná správa 2009, 46). One year later at 90.2 percent this rate had not changed significantly. In 2008, 95 percent of these full-time graduates continued their studies in a second-level training (Strhan 2009, 5).

The path-dependency of Slovakian higher education system and the preservation of old arrangements under the new structures is clearly visible: *„Insufficient knowledge obtained during first-level studies and low or non-acceptance of the BA academic title in the labour market were the most important reasons for the continuation of studies. This fact also proves that the higher education institutions did not create three-year Bachelor and two-year Master programmes, but they simply divided the five-year university studies into two separate periods. It is unthinkable that the requirements designated in the past for those 15-20 percent of most talented could be fulfilled by 50-70 percent of the population. Its most harmful result is a gradual but substantial decline.“* (Strhan 2009, 6-7).

Slovakia has missed the opportunity – offered by its uniform higher education system and the rapid change to the new structure – to reform its higher education in the spirit of the Bologna Declaration. Pre-eminently, we can speak about the content failure of the reform since it got stuck on the level of administrative measures. The higher education institutions were unable to break out of the shell of their inner traditions towards the creation of practical and market oriented first-level study programmes. The Accreditation Committee has also followed the easier way, evaluating the programmes according to formal requirements instead of examining their content from the point of view of practical demands. Public administration regulations have increasingly been defined by political advantages instead of directing reforms towards the content fulfilment of the Bologna objectives.

The introduction of the credit system

“The elaboration and introduction of a uniform credit-system aims at facilitating widespread student mobility and encouraging a more flexible system of study programs. It also assists students in finding suitable jobs in the European labour market as well as enhances the compatibility, attractiveness, and competitiveness of the European higher education” (Sprievodca 2006, 34). The introduction of ECTS has proved to be a big step forward within the Socrates/Erasmus programs. “*The ETCS is based on the amount of effort students put into their studies to reach their goals*” (Balla, 2005). The system was originally developed to facilitate students’ mobility by credit transfer. However, it has recently become a means of credit accumulation (*European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*).

In Slovak higher education the origins of the introduction of the credit system date back to the early 1990s. A legal framework for its introduction was created by § 62 of the 2002 higher education law (Zákon, 2002). The details and the form of the system’s introduction were defined in the ministerial order 614/2002 (Vyhláška, 2002). According to this law credits are allocated to components of study programs and represent the effort students must make to pass the relevant exams. The standard workload of one student is expressed by 60 credits in an academic year, 30 credits in a semester and 20 credits in a trimester (Zákon 2008, § 62, [2]).

“*The actual state of the implementation of the credit system and the Diploma Supplement was examined by the Conference of Rectors in 2004. Based on their report, 88 percent (sixteen) of the public higher education institutions applied the system in the manner prescribed by the ministerial order*” (Sprievodca 2006, 35). The high level of implementation can be attributed to the fact that the introduction of the credit system was compulsory for program accreditations. In sum, we can state that the legal framework for the

implementation was created in time. A Euro-conform system of documents and other printed forms needed for the appropriate implementation of the system was elaborated in both Slovak and English in 2002 (László 2008, 54). Until the academic year 2007/2008 the credit system and the credit documentation was comprehensively implemented in the whole higher education system.

Supporting student mobility

The creation of the European Higher Education Area as we have shown has as its main objective the improvement of permeability of system, the transferability and readability of degrees in a European and international context. These objectives are supported by the implementation of two- or three-cycle degree structures and credit-based learning. These technical-structural aspects help the establishment of a more flexible and open higher education system, which according to policy visions will improve the international mobility of students and faculty staff. *“The model to be followed in this respect is the American one for instance, where mobility between the different institutions is far beyond natural. There are, however, a couple of special features of that model making the whole system of mobility work easily there. These features are the diversified nature of the higher education system in the States and the general practice of flexible mobility in the American society itself”* (Hrubos 2003, 59).

In Slovakia various community and other mobility programs exist, which support the internationalization of Slovakian higher education. The European mobility programs in Slovakia are administered by SAAIC. Further opportunities are offered by the bi- and multilateral intergovernmental treaties signed by the Ministry of Education and the exchange programs organized by the Fulbright Committee concerning SAIA- and USA-related programs.

Unfortunately, there is only a limited amount of scholarship base for bilateral mobility co-operation between Slovak and foreign universities. By 2005 every public Slovak institution in higher education took part in European mobility programs (Socrates/Erasmus) (in 1998 only eight of them did so). In the academic year 2005/2006, 1,165 Slovak students took part in scholarship programs abroad lasting an average 4.7 months; most (305) from the Comenius University in Bratislava. For purposes of comparison: The number of students on scholarships was 380 in 1998/1999 and 682 in 2003/2004.⁶ This number is growing but it has not yet reached the one percent of the total number of students in Slovak higher education. Several foreign students studied at Slovak institutions within the Erasmus program. In the academic year 2005/2006 a total of 544 foreign students pursued shorter or longer courses of studies (248 students more than in the previous year). The University of Economics in Bratislava had the largest number (102) of foreign students. The level of teacher mobility, however, is very low. In the academic year 2005/2006, 383 teachers lectured abroad and 221 foreign ones taught in Slovakia. With the help of the Erasmus program approximately 120 Slovak teachers take part in scholarship programs abroad for one or two weeks every year (László 2008, 54-55).

Over half of Slovak higher education institutions have participated in the *Central European Exchange Programs for University Students (CEEPUS)* through which 233 Slovak students pursued studies and 128 teachers worked abroad; 223 foreign students and teachers came to higher education institutions in Slovakia (Výročná správa 2006, 50-53).

⁶ Three to twelve-month studies in the framework of Erasmus subprograms were completed between 1998 and 2003 in Germany by 633, in France by 247, in Spain by 197, in Belgium by 180 and in Italy by respectively 168 Slovak university students. According to the faculties, students of economic, engineering, foreign language, philologic and medical sciences predominated (Filkornová, Gadušová 2004).

Supporting the Lisbon strategy, the Slovak government formed the International Fellowship Program for promoting the mobility of home, foreign and doctoral students, lecturers and researchers. In 2006 the program allocated 168 home fellowships and 133 travel supports; 31 foreign students and 51 foreign lecturers and researchers were also sponsored. A total of 2,116 students and 474 teachers took part in these exchange programs between 1999 and 2002 (Filkornová, Gadušová 2004, 5). For both, students and teachers, there was a huge discrepancy between the number of incoming and outgoing students, where the former was insignificant compared to the outgoing students. The explanation has to be found in the low amount of student grants, the limited financial potentials of institutions, the low level of language skills (in both, students and teachers), the lack of high quality of infrastructure and the mentoring system. We should add that the recognition of studies abroad in mother institutions is still facing several difficulties. Recognition is not automatic in most institutions and programs since they are introducing additional requirements for outgoing students; in some cases the students even have to repeat some parts or whole semesters. Joint programs are very rare, only a few Slovak universities offer programs in foreign languages. In addition, Slovak study programs are not very well promoted abroad, and the standards for student accommodation, school canteens and services in general are low (Filkornová, Gadušová 2004).

Students' and teachers' mobility showed annual fluctuation and no continuous increase until the beginning of the Bologna process in 2005. The significant increase observable after this year is partly due to the fact that Slovakia has been a member of the European Union since 2004. In the academic year 2008/2009, 2,020 students and 563 teachers from Slovakia participated in the Erasmus program. At the same time 820 foreign students were hosted by various Slovakian institutions. In 2009, 202 further students, teachers and researchers got grants from the National Fellowship Program.

It also sponsored visits of 90 foreign students and 121 teachers to Slovakia. (Výročná správa 2010, 51-52). The majority of these are part-time study mobility, rather than diploma mobility. Apart from the European mobility program, students completely pursuing their studies abroad are also worth mentioning, because their number has multiplied compared to previous years with regard to Slovakian students. In 2004, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary became members of the European Union simultaneously and introduced the Bologna system practically at the same time. Moreover, the prestigious and high-standard Czech and Hungarian universities are appealing to Slovak students and Hungarian youths living in Slovakia since there are no language barriers. Their dynamic increase is illustrated by the fact that 7,437 Slovak students studying at Czech universities represented 5.2 percent of the Slovak citizen students studying in Slovakia in 2003, while in 2009 this rate reached 10.7 percent (Výročná správa 2009). Apart from the high standards, the attraction of the universities in Hungary for the Hungarian students living in Slovakia may originate in language reasons. Contrary to the Czech situation, the changing number of these young adults is then influenced by different factors. In 1995, there were 373 full-time Hungarian students living in Slovakia studying at universities of Hungary, thus representing 10.8 percent of the full-time Hungarian students living in Slovakia and studying at Slovak universities. This rate grew rapidly, reaching 19.4 percent in 1998 and 35.2 percent by 2003, just before the Hungarian language university was established in Komárno, Slovakia. In 2009, probably due to the opportunities of Hungarian language university education, 1,943 Hungarian students living in Slovakia pursued their studies in Hungary, thus representing 30.6 percent according to the above mentioned rates (Gyorsjelentés 2010).

The assurance of quality

As the Bologna Declaration puts it, there is a need for European cooperation in the field of quality assurance, based on a system of comparable criteria and methods. Questions of quality, quality assurance, quality assessment and quality control have always been a sensitive issue of higher education debates, which explains the moderate tone of the Declaration. Nonetheless, the process did start then and the following conferences welcomed the opportunity for making huge steps forward in the field. Issues of quality, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness had been on the policy agenda long before the Bologna process due to the expansion of the higher education system, the questioning of traditional steering practices and financial problems. However, the Bologna process has created a new platform for these debates, and this renewal is observable in every signatory country. Moreover, the quality issue is the most important element which connects the Bologna and Lisbon Processes. Regarding the latter quality assurance and control have been conceived as essential regulating mechanisms in higher education. In addition, we should mention that in the design, consultation and implementation of the Bologna policies (two-cycle degree structure, curricular reforms, and credit system) the national accreditation agencies played a major role backing the government.

The European Commission has taken part in the creation of quality assurance policies. In 2004, it divided the quality assurance procedure in five stages in order to guarantee the mutual recognition of European systems. The five stages are as follows: (1) creating an internal mechanism for quality assurance; (2) developing common standards, guideline principles and procedures; (3) creating an European register for quality assurance and accreditation agencies; (4) providing higher education institutions with freedom of choice concerning registered quality assessment agencies; (5) the acceptance by EU Member States of the decisions made by these

agencies. The accreditation of higher education programs and institutions has been introduced in Czechoslovakia right after the political transformation of 1989/90 through the Act 172/1990. Accreditation concentrates on academic standards, which has been received harshly by critics due to its indifference towards different types and levels of study programs and institutions as well as social and labour market needs. In addition, the procedure is criticized due to its highly bureaucratic nature. During the accreditation process, institutions are examined rigorously to determine whether they provide study courses and programs of higher education standards. The graduates of an accredited institution will receive a higher education diploma and the opportunity of pursuing postgraduate studies (and of achieving the titles of lecturers or professors). The accreditation process is carried out by the Accreditation Board, a consultative body to the government. The rights of the Committee are regulated by law (Zákon 2008, § 81, § 82, § 83).

Until 1999, higher education faculties had been evaluated annually based on their own reports. This evaluation included three areas: research activities, educational activities and the qualification levels of employees and their research results. Based on this evaluation, faculties were assigned to one of four quality categories (Zákon 1990, § 17). After the 2002 higher education law was passed, evaluation became a part of a complex accreditation procedure carried out by the Accreditation Board. Prior to that, the evaluation process had been institutionally separated from the accreditation procedure. According to the law (Zákon 2008, § 84 [1]), the complex accreditation of higher education institutions is a process evaluating the conditions for education, research, development, the arts and many other activities. The Board judges the requests for accreditation of all study programs, and the requests of universities for the nomination of lecturers and professors (László 2008, 56).

The regulations on the Accreditation Board adopted by the Republic of Slovakia on 19 March 2003 defined a series of new and

complex criteria (Nariadenie 2003). The regulations are based on experiences from quality control, quality assurance and accreditation procedures and on recommendations by political and professional bodies and institutions having an interest in the implementation of the Bologna process. The complex process of accreditation appears to be novel for stakeholders in Slovakia and is regarded as a means of diversification of higher education institutions in both horizontal and vertical terms. (László 2008, 56.)

Apart from the process of accreditation, two other new initiatives concern higher education quality assurance in Slovakia. As a result of the official statement issued in Berlin, the Conference of Rectors in Slovakia and the government have come to an agreement on the form quality evaluation at higher education institutions should take on. According to the agreement, the financial sources for the assessment will be provided by the government. As stated by the quality evaluation project compiled by the Conference of Rectors, higher education institutions will have to undergo an international institutional process of evaluation developed and carried out by experts of the European University Association (EUA). Their methods and techniques would then be used with a principle of autonomous evaluation that is carried out independently, without any influence on the part of the government or the institutions themselves. The aim of the project is to create a national system of higher education institutions and support the formation of a “culture of quality”. The idea of an overall evaluation of the whole Slovak higher education system has also been suggested, thereby declaring its European dimensions (Čikesova 2005).

The strengthening of vertical differences in higher education (institutional and program rankings) and the (methodological) difficulties of measuring “quality” have become other important issues in Slovakian higher education debates. At the end of 2004, the civil organization of Academic Rank and Ranking Agency (ARRA) was formed on the model of research selectivity exercise, later

called research assessment exercise operating in the United Kingdom. This is the first independent institution in Slovakia that intends to provide the public with regular information on higher education standards by comparing institutions (László 2008, 57). Its goals are: (1) to develop a method for quality evaluation; (2) to compile a ranked list of institutions and faculties; and (3) to encourage a raising of standards and competition. This is achieved with the help of a clear, attainable list of criteria using publicly accessible data. Banks and mobile phone services' providers were among the sponsors of ARRA, and it was also assisted by the European Social Fund. The evaluation is based on selected indicators and criteria (Správa ARRA 2005). The academic community and other higher education agents harshly criticized the first report of ARRA published in 2005.

The agency's most important mistake was to publish a poorly elaborated report with various methodological shortcomings. For example, it failed to provide data for one-third of the criteria (only twenty-three out of thirty-four criteria were provided with data). The agency was also criticized for the exclusive use of the Web of Knowledge database in assessing publications and several criteria were questioned, as they can easily be positively manipulated even without quality improvement. There was also disagreement over the division of faculties into six disciplines. Many thought that the system of criteria, the method of evaluation, and the scoring favoured the universities in Bratislava, as most members of the agency's supervising council and professional council work or have worked at these institutions or were students there, compromising ARRA's independence. Although ARRA has specified its criteria, they could not win either the academic and civil society or the political public life over to their cause. To date, ARRA publishes its annual ranking evaluation report gaining short term publicity, however, with insignificant impact on higher education policies and institutions (László 2008, 57-58). The new government formed in

2010 wants to reach the goal of quality improvement by means of essential changes concerning the criteria of accreditation assessment and by developing a completely new system for higher education and research subsidy. To date, the quality improvement of higher education might be influenced mostly by state subsidies. The published methodology of the financial distributions for 2010 shows this tendency. However, all of this will not result in overall success unless the share of the budget invested in higher education exceeds one percent.

The European dimension of higher education

The European dimension of higher education consists of fostering student mobility, recognition of studies abroad, supporting inter-institutional cooperation in education (e.g. joint courses and programs) and research, and expanding the Europe-related content in the curriculum. The recommendations of the Prague and Berlin Conferences regarding the support for a European dimension of higher education are essentially concerned with two things. The national institutions of higher education were asked (1) to develop modules and courses with Europe-related contents on all educational levels and (2) to make mutual use of academic human resources and cultural traditions. To make higher education compatible with European standards, the institutions in Slovakia are also giving high priority to the mobility of students and teachers. However, legal regulations as well as accreditation mechanisms are currently hindering the launching of joint programs with partners from abroad and the issuing of double or joint diplomas. The expansion and development of student and teacher mobility is happening at a very slow pace, though important steps have also been taken.

Some universities are already inviting guest lecturers (from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland). Several have launched pro-

grams in or created faculties for European studies. On the whole, though, institutions are not energetically introducing programs or subjects in European studies (László 2008, 58). The 2007 amendment of the higher education law allows universities and colleges to create joint study programmes. One of their advantages is the share of guaranteeing study programmes. However, necessitating those laws according to which the students must spend an adequate part of their studies at a partner institution creates such an obstacle that the spreading of the practice of joint programmes is restrained. Neither home universities among one another, nor home universities together with foreign institutions have grasped the opportunity offered. Despite this situation, the accreditation committee has developed neither its system of criteria nor (together with the government) its system of stimulation (Zákon 2008, § 54a, [1]). To date (2011) the Faculty of Central European Studies of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and some other faculties have tried to organize study programmes that reach beyond the state borders.

Conclusion

The Bologna process celebrated its tenth birthday on 19 June 2009. During these ten years, a significant change took place in European higher education. The present study has given a detailed examination of Slovakia's performance in this process. The one-level educational system, as well as the system of basic and higher studies and the system of credits have all provided a good basis for the realization of the goals of the Bologna process. Slovakia was among the first to pass a law that declared the introduction of the Bologna objectives as of 1 April 2002. An undoubted advantage is the speed with which Slovakia has adopted the Bologna system without major conflicts. Summing up, on the basis of its results in the field of putting the Bologna system into practice, Slovakia oc-

cupies a prominent place among the countries of the European Union. A ministerial conference was organized in Leuven and Louvain-La-Neuve on the 28 and 29 April 2009 to evaluate the ten years of the Bologna process. While much has been achieved in implementing the Bologna reforms, the reports also illustrate that the European Higher Education Area action lines are implemented to varying degrees. The objectives set by the Bologna Declaration and policies developed in the subsequent years are still valid today. To achieve them, the conference has set the priorities for the next decade. By declaring these priorities, the ministers of education have announced the European Higher Education Area on 11 and 12 March 2010 by means of the Budapest-Vienna Declaration.

For Slovakia, the accentuated priorities of the decade represent such a content change in higher education that students are provided with knowledge, skills and competences that are essential for success in the labour market, with access to lifelong learning and raising the subsidy of the higher education and research to the level common among the developed European countries. Slovakia has completed well the formal transformation to the Bologna process. Now it should realize the complete content reform of higher education and research to become a valuable full member of the European Higher Education Area.

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The Bologna Process in Slovenia

Anna Orosz

Introduction

In the beginning of the 1990s, significant changes in the political, economic and social structures happened in South-Eastern Europe. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was replaced by many smaller states as a result of bloody conflicts which had serious consequences on the development of the region. Among these countries, Slovenia stood closest to the EU. As the armed conflict lasted only for a short time, Slovenia could start the integration process earlier which meant the break up with the Balkan past. For the country of 20,273 square kilometres and ca. two million inhabitants which had just got away from its former economic linkages, it was of utmost importance to build broader relationships with the EU and its Member States. Therefore, accession process following the association agreement adopted in 1996 became a priority on the political agenda. Nonetheless, the European commitment was accompanied by strong protection of national interests which enabled Slovenia to join the EU in May 2004 under favourable conditions.

In parallel with the European integration process, Slovenia was forming its separate higher education system, which the European higher education reform processes - called Bologna process after the Bologna Declaration of 1999 - affected in a growing extent. Nevertheless, the higher education reform process had already started in the 1980s which was partly initiated by the higher education institutions and partly by the ministry. The reforms became necessary as a consequence of changes in the social and economic environment, in which the higher education system should have prepared itself for the new challenges. Among others, quality issues

related to increasing number of students in higher education got on the surface in the competition with US system which allured more and more European and Asian students and researchers. Furthermore growing attention was paid to the role of higher education in increasing economic competitiveness in which aspect that time the European Community lagged behind the USA and Japan. This was one of the reasons why strengthened cooperation among and harmonization of European higher education systems had been fostered in the framework of the European integration. It was thought that reform and harmonization of higher education systems, increasing mobility of students, professors and researchers and the recognition of qualifications at European level would smooth the way for optimal use of European labour force and knowledge.

Thanks to this, European mobility programmes (i.e. Socrates/Erasmus) had been launched along with the establishment of the framework for mutual recognition of qualifications which resulted in the adoption of the Lisbon Convention in 1997. Furthermore, the credit transfer system and the diploma supplement had been formulated in order to foster mobility but the European wide exchange of views and experiences on quality assurance can be also mentioned as important steps. In 1998 four education ministers of the EU from France, Italy, United Kingdom and Germany signed the Sorbonne Declaration in which they reaffirmed the importance of the above mentioned goals and they agreed on the foundation of a European higher education area. In 1999 many other countries joined this initiative in the frame of the Bologna Declaration which soon transcended the EU's borders. Therefore it is important to note that the Bologna process is not exclusively connected to the EU, even though it plays an important role in its promotion.

It is also to be noted that heads of higher education institutions joined the process as well, which could provide a wider legitimacy to these reforms. Namely, higher education institutions had also launched a cooperation process by the Magna Charta Universitatum

in 1988 in which they confirmed their common values on higher education like institutional autonomy and the freedom of education and research which also meant a distinction from the central governments. This increased the significance of that the different stakeholders stand together for the goals of the Bologna process. Since the sign of the Bologna Declaration more than a decade has passed through which enormous reforms have been carried out. Many steps were taken in order to establish the European Higher Education Area. However, this doesn't mean that these actors represent a common standpoint since there are many fields where their interests confront. In the light of this, achievements in the Bologna process shall be examined and evaluated by considering views of all these actors. Furthermore, traditions and characteristics of the higher education systems shall be taken into account – in this case, the heritage of the Yugoslav higher education – which to a wide extent determine the way of the implementation of the Bologna process. In this paper, I take an attempt to introduce the Slovenian case in this way.

Antecedent of the Bologna process

Slovenia as it was formerly part of Yugoslavia inherited many characteristics of its higher education system. The disintegration of the federal state had seriously affected the direction of the Slovenian higher education reform. Beyond the change of borders, economic transformation, globalization and the European integration process can be mentioned as main motivating factors of the reforms. In Yugoslavia, though the member states had the authority on higher education policy, their systems showed uniformity from various points of view. Among others, the fragmented institutional structure of the universities should be highlighted that was handled in very different ways in the new states after the disintegration of

Yugoslav federal state. The university with fragmented structure means a loose association of faculties, professional colleges and art academies having a wide range of autonomy within which the university level represents only weak competences. The important decisions were made by the heads of the subunits (Clark, Neave 1992, 813). As a consequence, there was no opportunity to form a university-level development strategy and there was a lack of communication among the subunits of the university (Haug, Tauch 2001, 59-60) and the financial resources could not be efficiently utilized. Next to universities, higher vocational schools and cadre training institutions worked but their role decreased significantly by the 1980s (Clark, Neave 1992, 813). Accordingly, universities had become the main actors of the system, and their social and economic role had further strengthened on the ground of their research activities.

Study programmes covered both the theoretical university studies and the professional practice-oriented studies. Students could choose professional trainings of 2-3 years as well as studies of minimum 4-5 years ending with university-level degree. Nevertheless the latter type of studies lasted usually 1 or 2 years longer and drop-out rates were relatively high. The accomplishment of the first university studies could be followed by either specialized studies of 1-2 years or the 2-year long master studies (*magisterium*). Doctoral studies represented the highest level of education that needed in general 3-5 years (*ibid.*, 815).

The change of regime and the disruption of Yugoslavia had serious consequences on the higher education of the newly independent state of Slovenia. On the one hand, it had become necessary to expand the institutional system as the country had only two universities – the University of Ljubljana (*Univerza v Ljubljani*) and the University of Maribor (*Univerza v Mariboru*). On the other hand, a new legislative framework corresponding to the new economic, social and political conditions should have been established. The

first Slovenian act on higher education had been adopted in 1993 which was later modified in 1999 on the basis of evaluation of experiences. In compliance with the act, only the universities and higher education institutions independent from universities are legal entities so it has unified legally the universities' structures. Furthermore, it has regulated the relation of the universities and the central government and has provided decision-making competences to the higher education institutions regarding their internal institutional issues. The universities were legally prescribed to adopt a new university statute. However, these measures and those took later could not lead to the full unification of university structure. For instance in the biggest universities of Slovenia in Ljubljana and Maribor, the faculties still enjoy broad range of autonomy and freedom of action, and understand and implement the decisions of the university senate in very different ways – as found by the EUA evaluation reports (University of Maribor, EUA Evaluation Report 2004, University of Ljubljana, EUA Evaluation Report 2007). Similar issues appear in the case of the University of Primorska which despite of its late establishment in 2003 has similar decentralized (or asymmetrically centralized) institutional structure (University of Primorska, EUA Evaluation Report 2010).

Beyond the reform of university structure, the new act also enabled the establishment of private institutions independent from universities. Specific attention was paid to the development of higher vocational and technical training on which a separate act was adopted in 1996. As a result of these advancements, the institutional and material preconditions for higher education have been broadened (Master Plan for Higher Education 2002, 1). Accordingly, the following types of institutions are functioning in Slovenia currently: university (*univerza*), faculty (*fakulteta*), art academy (*umetniška akademija*) and higher professional school (*visoka strokovna šola*). Since the late 1990s Slovenia experienced a significant wave of founding institutions. The third public university

has been established in Primorska (*Univerza Primorskem*), as well as a private institution in Nova Gorica (*Univerza v Novi Gorici*). Furthermore, there was an increase in the number of small scale higher education institutions mainly providing vocational training which counteracted the great geographic centralization of the Slovenian higher education system (ibid.). This was also necessary in order to increase participation in higher education. From this point of view, the system seems to be successful as the number of those involved in higher education has been tripled (Bologna National Report 2004-2005, 10).

In 1995 and 1996 study structure has been reformed as well, which resulted in the restructuring of study cycles (establishment of undergraduate study and post-graduate study) and ended the former shorter, 1-2 year long professional programmes and introduced instead of them 3- and 4-year long professionally-oriented undergraduate study next to first-cycle academic university study. The latter also held on to last 4 years and gave university degree. The act defined three different qualifications at post-graduate level:

- specialist (*specializacija*): qualification offered after accomplishing 1 or 2-year long post-graduate study;
- master degree (*magisterij*): 2-year long study which can be followed by doctoral study;
- doctoral degree (*doktorat znanosti*): 4-year study.

From the end of 1990s, the Act on Higher Education did not restrict the participation in doctoral studies to those finishing successfully their master studies so the two study cycles could not be divided so clearly. In order to enable future reforms and formulate higher education policy, the act foresaw the establishment of more puffer organizations which since then supports the communication and exchange of views among higher education institutions and central government. The most important advisory body is the Council for Higher Education (*Svet za visoko šolstvo*) functioning since 1994

whose twelve members is appointed by the Government for four years. Members shall represent the scientific fields, arts and different professions. Accordingly, six members are nominated from professors and academics proposed by the institutions. Furthermore, rectors of universities and the head of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts (*Slovenska akademija znanosti i umetnosti*) take place in the Council. The body has the following tasks among others:

- to professionally prepare in cooperation with higher education institutions and the ministry the future national higher education reform programme;
- to approve education, research and artistic programmes;
- to define the criteria of assessment of study programmes, taking into account international requirement of comparability and the length of studies;
- to determine the conditions of transfers between study programmes; and
- to examine the intention of founding new higher education institutions and introduction of new study programmes, etc.

The Council with some changes in its function and membership has been taking the responsibilities mentioned above till now. Beyond the Council for Higher Education, based on the initiative of the Rectors' Conference the Quality Assessment Commission (*Komisija za kvaliteta visokega šolstva*) has been established in 1996 which consists of the representatives of different fields of professions and sciences. It pursued the regular evaluation of higher education institutions and the monitoring of their activities in line with the criteria prescribed by the Council for Higher Education and reported about the results to the higher education institutions, the Council for Higher Education and the Scientific and Technological Council (*Svet za znanost in tehnologijo*) (Higher Education Act [Amendments 1999] Art. 80).

Reforms related to the Bologna process have been taken place after the end of the 1990s. Credit system was introduced in 1998 in case of post-graduate studies. Furthermore, the preparation of diploma supplement started. The European Credit Transfer and Accreditation System (ECTS) served as a basis for the credit system, however, as a consequence of various practices used by higher education institutions, no unified system could be elaborated (Sziójártó 2006, 136). The processes started in 1990s which on the one hand led to the self-standing Slovenian higher education and supported the accommodation to European and international trends on the other hand, were not finished by the end of decade. The Slovenian higher education system is still in the process of continuous reform motivated partly by the Bologna process which is an important but very controversial factor at the same time.

Implementation of the Bologna process

Establishment of legal and institutional framework

In the 1990s, legal and institutional framework of the self-standing Slovenian higher education system has been mainly created. Nevertheless, in 1999 new wave of reforms has started in Europe, to which Slovenia joint as well. The signature of the Bologna Declaration was one of the first steps taken that was followed by further reforms. Among others, the study cycles and in this context, the labour market adequacy of new qualifications as well as quality assurance, appropriate modification of credit system and the consequences of internationalization and the tasks accompanying it needed to be reconsidered. A successful planning and implementation demanded the possible widest social participation, involving employers and students so the circle of actors in higher education reform broadened. In 2000 Quality Assessment Commission's

membership was complemented by representatives of students, and worked further on under the name of National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission (*Nacionalna komisija za kvaliteta visokega šolstva*). The most important changes happened in 2004 when the Parliament adopted the amendment of the Act on Higher Education. The number of members of the Council for Higher Education has been raised to 15 by involving the representatives of the government, students and employers. In addition, its task changed according to the following:

- in cooperation with higher-education institutions and the ministry responsible for higher education, prepare professional starting points for the design of the national programme of higher education,
- advise the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in the preparation and adoption of higher-education legislation,
- advise the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in the planning of the development of higher education,
- determine the criteria for accreditation and re-accreditation of higher-education institutions and study programmes,
- determine the criteria for the design and accreditation of joint study programmes, wherein it shall apply the principles on establishing a European higher education space and other international principles and recommendations for the design of such programmes,
- determine the criteria for credit assessment of study programmes under ECTS and define minimum proportion of selection in study programmes,
- determine criteria for transfers between study programmes,
- determine criteria for recognising knowledge and skills acquired prior to enrolment in the programme,
- provide professional opinions on compliance with conditions for the establishment or transformation of a higher-education institution,

- give consent for study programmes,
- give repeat consent for study programmes at least every seven years, wherein it shall primarily respect the findings from self-evaluation and external evaluation reports,
- give opinions regarding the criteria of higher-education institutions for appointment to titles of higher-education teachers and scientific workers,
- issue to independent higher-education institutions consent to the appointment to titles of higher-education teachers, scientific staff and higher-education staff,
- cooperate with foreign accreditation institutions and their experts. (Higher Education Act (Zvis) 2004, Art. 49)

The Council for Higher Education can furthermore initiate the set up of expert committees for promoting accreditation and other activities. Later, according to a decision of the Constitutional Court in 2008, the professional, administrative and technical tasks and duties were overtaken by the Secretariat of the Council (National Bologna Report 2007-2009, 2). In 2004 the amended Act on Higher Education ordered the introduction of the Bologna three-cycle education system, the adaptation of the credit system to ECTS as well as the reorganization of higher education organizations. The ministry had been also restructured. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (*Ministrstvo za visoko šolstvo in tehnologijo*) took the tasks of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in the field of higher education in 2004 (Bologna National Report 2004-2005, 1). In addition two other acts of 2004 are to be mentioned: the Act on Recognition and Assessment of Education and the Act on Higher Vocational Training.

It highlights the significance of quality assurance and accreditation that the act furthermore prescribed the establishment of a national agency by 31 December 2005. In the Bergen Report, it was called Council for Evaluation of Higher Education. This Coun-

cil would have replaced the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission. Accordingly, the Council for Evaluation of Higher Education would have carried out the external evaluation of the institutions and programmes, including post-secondary vocational training programmes (ibid., 2). However, this national agency had been not established finally. Instead, in compliance with the amended Act on Higher Education of 2006, the Agency of Higher Education (*Urad RS za visoko šolstvo*) has been established within the Ministry in order to provide professional, administrative and organizational promotion to the work of the Council for Higher Education which has become also responsible for external evaluation. The Council for Higher Education got further support from the Council for Science and Technology, while the Council for Student Affairs deals with the affairs of students. The supervision of the Bologna process is carried out by the National Bologna Promoters' Group set up in 2004, and at national level by an expert group established in 2003.

Before going to details of the evaluation of the elements of the Bologna reforms, it is worth briefly writing about the content of the Master Plan for Higher Education adopted in 2002. The Master Plan analyses in detail the most important steps should be taken in the field of higher education. The document put emphasis on the issue of adapting the Slovene higher education system to the international circumstances. The internationalization of higher education, the increase of competition among institutions – both at international and national level – provides many opportunities but appears also as challenge for the Slovene higher education. The Slovene higher education institutions – because of the small size of the country and the decreasing ratio of the population who usually participate in higher education¹ - shall on the long run attract also in-

¹ Note: According to the draft National Higher Education Plan 2011-2020: "By 2020, the number of nineteen year-olds, i.e. the generation which usually enrolls in higher education institutions, will decrease by 20% compared to 2010. (p. 4.), http://www.mvzt.gov.si/fileadmin/mvzt.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/odnosi_z_javnostmi/14.10._NPVS.pdf, accessed 29/05/2011.

ternational students as well in order to be able to sustain their activities. Taking into account the other side of the coin, the openness of the system could provide better opportunities for Slovenes, as the Slovenian higher education institutions won't be able to offer study programmes in all professional fields in a cost efficient way. In this light, the targets of the Bologna process and the participation in international programmes become very important. Nevertheless, these aspects do not always show up (Master Plan for Higher Education 2002).

Introduction of the three study cycles

As described above, the structure of studies in Slovenia differed from the Bologna three-cycle study from several aspects. On the one hand, similarly to other European countries the basic university study programmes were longer, lasted usually for at least 4-5 years and their curricula focused on the transfer of a broad scale of theoretical knowledge. These study programmes often were unable to follow the changes in the labour market and the economy. Concerning the post-graduate level, the master and doctoral studies did not build on each other so closely as in the Bologna system. The Master studies – unlike general trends – were not always a prerequisite for doctoral studies. It was rather a possible intermediate stage between the university degree and attainment of doctorate. The reform of the study structure was prepared by the amendments of the Act in 2004. Nonetheless, the implementation took several years. It was the first academic year in 2009/10 when students could only enrol in Bologna programmes (National Bologna Report 2007-2009, 4.) The study cycles have been structured in the following way:

1. *First cycle (bachelor)*: Study programmes in this cycle can be either professionally oriented or academic studies lasting for at least 3 or 4 years and in accordance with Bologna system provides an opportunity to achieve 180 or 240 ECTS. Their accomplishment is awarded by either university degree (*diplomirani...[UN]*), or professional degree (*diplomirani...[VS]*).
2. *Second cycle (master)*: The 1-2 year long master study has become an independent study cycle – in converse to the former system – which is also a requirement for being accepted into a doctoral programme. Students can gain 60 or 120 ECTS in this cycle and at the end of their studies get a Master degree (*magister*). However, in some specific fields 5-year long studies (for 300 credits) are still existent. These are the so called long non-structured master studies.
3. *Third cycle (doctoral study)*: to be eligible for a three-year long (180 ECTS), students firstly have to finish either their master studies or a 5-year long basic studies (for 300 ECTS). Students finishing a 4-year long bachelor study may also apply for doctoral studies if they have documented research results. The name of the doctoral title (*Doktor znanosti*) did not change. Doctoral studies shall include courses in the value of at least 60 credits providing basic knowledge to doctoral students needed for their research work but these programmes mainly based on the cooperation and dialogue of the mentor and the student.

The slow introduction of the three cycles reflected the cautiousness and scepticism of the actors of the Slovenian higher education system, particularly faculties defending their position and status from any interference. (Zgaga, Miklavič 2011, 20) The Bologna National Report in 2003 expressed their concerns that the introduction of the new structure without a preliminary examination and evaluation may have had negative effects (Implementation of the Bologna Declaration. 2003, 1). Not surprisingly, only three faculties accred-

ited Bologna-type study programmes in 2005 (Bologna National Report 2004-2005, 2). Conversely, the Bologna National Report published in the end of 2006 has already reported about 162 study programmes from which 80 per cent is the restructured form of formerly existing programmes. At the same time, only 95 Bologna-type study programmes started in 2006 which only accounted for ca. 22 per cent of all study programmes (Bologna National Report 2005-2007, 7). In the academic year 2008/9 more than half of the undergraduate and one third of the post-graduate programmes have been organized according to the new structures (National Bologna Report 2007-2009, 4). The University of Ljubljana in its Self-Evaluation Report put great emphasis on the reform of study structure. It foresaw the introduction of the bachelor studies by 2007, then secondly of the Master studies by 2008 and last but not least of the new doctoral studies by 2009 (Self-evaluation report of the University of Ljubljana 2007). A similar plan was described by the University of Maribor which defined 2009 as a deadline for restructuring. At the University of Maribor, the Bologna structure mainly characterized the professionally oriented bachelor study programmes (Undergraduate study at the University of Maribor 2007) and some faculties (i.e. Faculty of Agriculture and the one of Logistics) launched new master and doctoral programmes (Postgraduate study at University of Maribor 2007). The University of Primorska also initiated the accreditation of the new programmes in 2005 and predicted the finalization by 2008 (Programme restructuring 2007). Nevertheless, turning back to the reform process at the University of Ljubljana, it is to mention that there was no unified implementation strategy so the subunits of the universities did not restructure their programmes in the same way that could cause some confusion for outsiders (University of Ljubljana, EUA Evaluation Report 2007).

Difficulties in introducing the new study structure was also related to the political approach from 2004 which simply made paral-

els between the former and Bologna structures by making former diploma correspondent with the second-cycle degree and according to which the development of the structure equalled to upgrading curricula. (Zgaga, Miklavič 2011, 20)

The development of national qualification framework (NQF) is stipulated by the Higher Education Act. This process started by the drafting of the Decree on the Introduction and Use of the Classification System of Education and Training (KLASIUS) by representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and the Statistical Office. The Decree adopted in 2006 is used as the compulsory national standards. In 2008 the ENIC/NARIC Centre joint also international projects in order to promote the formation of NQFs. In 2008 the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology published a tender within so called targeted research programmes scheme Slovenia's Competitiveness 2006-13 for the development of NQF for higher education (Bologna National Report 2007-2009) but the process has not finished yet and so has become an element of the recent higher education master plan.

ECTS and the Diploma Supplement

The ECTS and the diploma supplement are two elements of the Bologna process which play important role in fostering mobility and the set up of conditions for the mutual recognition of qualifications. With regard to the fact that Slovenia is a small country and is a member of the European Union since May 2004, these aspects gain more significance. The ECTS besides playing an important role in assessing the education achievements and the formulation of life-long learning system serves the promotion of international mobility which is an outstanding issue for the Slovene higher education. The Council for Higher Education decided to eliminate differ-

ences in the use of credit system in 2003 and worked out the regulatory framework in accordance with international standards. (Sziójártó 2006) The system introduced in 2004 enabled both the transfer and accumulation of credits and obligated its use for all study cycles (Eurydice 2007, 286). Nevertheless, the credits attained by the courses did not always reflect the real workload but simply the number of lessons. Therefore further modifications were still necessary. The last Bologna National Report 2007-2009 states that the use of ECTS is linked to learning outcomes in cases of all study programmes. The appropriate implementation of the ECTS was supported by a public tender (p. 27).

The higher education institutions have issued diploma supplements since the academic year 2000/01. The regulation adopted in 2004 developed this system by further prescribing that the Diploma Supplement shall be provided for all study programmes in Slovenian and another official language of the EU for free of charge. The content of the Diploma Supplement is determined by the minister for higher education on basis of the proposal of the Council for Higher Education. At the beginning the Ministry promoted the issuance of the diploma supplement by organizing seminars and workshops and financial contribution as well. Besides the Ministry, Bologna Supporter Group did a lot in order to enable the introduction of diploma supplement. (Eurydice 2007, 286.) Since then diploma supplement has become a useful instrument of recognition procedure as well.

Recognition of qualifications

Slovenia signed Lisbon Convention among the first countries in 1997 which was then ratified and got into force in 1999. At the beginning, the recognition process was regulated by the Act on the Recognition of Certificates of Foreign Schools which was super-

seded by the Act on the Recognition and Assessment of Education in January 2005. Both measures remitted the recognition of higher education qualifications to higher education institutions. The national assembly amended to some extent the act and excluded the Ministry from the academic recognition procedure but authorized the latter to make decisions on professional recognition cases. Furthermore the act obligated the higher education institutions to appoint a contact person who would be responsible for such issues. (Bologna National Report 2004-2005, 6) Within the Ministry, Education Recognition Division manages the tasks related to professional recognition and functions as an information centre for ENIC (*European Network of Information Centres*) system. (Bologna National Report 2005-2007, 17) The Division is responsible for both national and international duties and tasks:

- It collects and provides adequate, reliable and authentic information on national and foreign education systems, admission requirements, qualifications awarded in Slovenia in other countries, legislation on recognition, recognition procedure, information on accredited institutions, the Lisbon Recognition Convention etc. to all interested parties;
- In accordance with the Recognition and Assessment of Education Act the Slovenian ENIC is a competent authority for professional recognition, assessment of the Slovenian and foreign qualifications (citizens, higher education institutions, etc);
- ENIC provides basic information on the professional recognition of the regulated professions (EU Directives);
- It contributes to higher education policy development and legislation, changes of the education system at national level;
- It organises or actively participates at national information seminars and workshops, prepares publications, information and other materials on education system, recognition, and participates in publications, surveys, comparative studies and other research activities;

- It promotes the Lisbon Recognition Convention, ENIC and NARIC Networks;
- It cooperates with different organisations/institutions in the field of recognition and it participates in the elaboration of publications, information and other materials on the home education system and participates in publications, surveys, comparative studies and other research activities undertaken by the European Commission, Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international organisations. (Bologna National Report 2007-2009, 25-26)

For ensuring appropriate understanding, implementation and performing of recognition procedures at educational institutions seven national information seminars and workshops were organised which proved to be very useful in a view of better communication with institutions, exchange of good practices and the promotion of Diploma Supplement, stipulations of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its Supplementary Documents (*ibid.*, 26).

Mobility and internationalization

As mentioned earlier, it is very important for Slovenia to participate in international cooperation and mobility programmes. Slovenia firstly joined the EU Tempus programme and then expanded its involvement in mobility programmes like the Socrates/Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, etc. Since then student mobility has significantly increased. In the times of joining the Socrates programme, in the academic year of 1999/2000 only 170 students were involved while in 2005/06 already 879.² The most visited countries were Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy and France. Concerning the ratio of

² Time series: Erasmus student mobility (number of outgoing students): 1987/88-2006/07, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/statisti/table1.pdf>, accessed 01/12/2011.

incoming and outgoing students, Slovenia was rather an exporting country at the beginning: in the academic year 2004/05, Slovenia has 742 outgoing students and 387 incoming students, while in 2009/2010 there were 1368 outgoing and 1237 incoming students.³ In the frame of the Erasmus programme, mobility toward Central and Eastern Europe is marginal but this is balanced by the involvement in CEEPUS (*Central European Exchange Program for University Studies*) programme through which 400 students – approximately the same number of incoming and outgoing students – moved from one country to another each year. Beyond these, exchange of students is arranged by bi- and multilateral agreement among universities but these represent minor ratio in the whole student exchange. According to the Trends V Report, the ratio of incoming and outgoing students got balanced in 2007 (Crosier et al 2007, 44.) and since then this has not really changed.

What professors mobility concerns, 139 professors left and 154 arrived to Slovenia through the Socrates programme in the academic year 2004/05.⁴ These numbers increased to 277 and 316 in 200/10⁵ and reflect the growing interest of foreign academics toward the country. This process can be partly the consequence of that the Slovene Government contributed to the development of university networks and relations from the resources of Structural Funds. (National Bologna Report 2005-2007, 23)

It marked the recognition of the significance of mobility that the Slovene Government established the Ad Futura – Scientific and Education Foundation in 2002 whose main responsibility is the financial and information promotion of international mobility. Tak-

³ Erasmus: student mobility 2004/2005: Total number of students by home and host country, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/statisti/table105.pdf>, accessed 01/12/2011. Outgoing and incoming Erasmus student mobility in 2009/2010, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/0910/students.pdf>, accessed 10/06/2011.

⁴ Erasmus teacher mobility 2004/2005: Number of teachers by home and host country, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/statisti/table305.pdf>, accessed 01/04/2007.

⁵ Outgoing and incoming Erasmus staff mobility for teaching assignments in 2009/2010, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/statisti/table306.pdf>, accessed 10/06/2011.

ing into account the financial burden of mobility, the Slovene Government endeavours to promote it by loans and scholarships also available abroad (National Bologna Report 2004-2005: 7.) Next to governments, the higher education institutions themselves got more active in fostering international mobility – both in case of incoming and outgoing mobility. With their participation, the Centre for Mobility, European Education and Training Programmes has been established which has the task to carry out activities (set up of information web portals, publish brochures, etc.) in order to promote and intensify mobility. (National Bologna Report 2005-2007, 23) Furthermore, at national level special scholarships (e.g. company scholarships) and loans are offered by the Slovene Human Resource Development and Scholarship Fund. The Slovenian Government also set quota of subsidized accommodation in dormitories. Majority of grants and loans are portable in case of short-term mobility programmes. Concerning full programmes, scholarships are provided if that type of programmes are not available in Slovenia or it is more suitable to study abroad. International involvement of the Slovenian higher education has broadened in the frame of the Euro-Mediterranean region but the Western Balkans also belongs to the priority regions too. Relations to Asian countries started to develop as well. Provisions for transnational education have been strengthened by the amendment of the Higher Education Act in 2009 (National Bologna Report 2007-2009).

However, it is to note that level of mobility and internationalization of the Slovene higher education actors is still relatively low in comparison with EU averages and therefore, it is an important element of the current draft National Higher Education Plan 2011-2020 (Draft of National Higher Education Plan 2011-2020).

Quality assurance

Quality assurance may be one of the priority areas of Bologna reforms in Slovenia. Since the 1990s it has been the Council for Higher Education responsible for determining its conditions (i.e. defining criteria, monitoring of results, etc.). At the same time, the task of evaluating quality is performed by higher education institutions. Since 2000 the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission consisting of representatives of higher education institutions and students has provided support to self-evaluation process. The Commission monitored and evaluated the efficiency and quality of research, teaching and artistic activities carried out by higher education institutions. In 2004 the quality assurance system was modified and restricted. It was an important change on the one hand that representatives of students and employers have been involved into the process. On the other hand, the law envisaged a regular external evaluation procedure and the establishment of new bodies (Agency for Higher Education, Evaluation Council). The National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission also prepared the Criteria for monitoring, assessment and assurance of quality in the higher education institutions, study programmes, science and research, and in artistic and professional work in October 2004, taking into account Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Despite these advancements, many plans have not been implemented: the new bodies have not been established so the most important tasks related to quality assurance and accreditation remained the competence of the Council for Higher. This was incorporated into the Act on Higher Education amended in 2006. The authority of the Council for Higher Education has broadened and got involved into the external evaluation of the higher education institutions and their study programmes as well. According to the

amended act, the Council as accreditation body performs independently the following tasks:

- determines the criteria for accreditation and re-accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes,
- determines the criteria for the design and accreditation of joint study programmes, wherein it shall apply the principles on establishing a European higher education space and other international principles and recommendations for the design of such programmes,
- determines the criteria for credit assessment of study programmes under ECTS and define minimum proportion of selection in study programmes,
- determines the criteria for transfers between study programmes,
- determines the criteria for recognising knowledge and skills acquired prior to enrolment in the programme,
- co-operates with foreign accreditation institutions and their experts,
- provides professional opinions on compliance with conditions for the establishment or transformation of a higher education institution,
- gives consent for study programmes,
- co-operates with foreign accreditation institutions and their experts,
- at least every seven years gives renewed consent for study programmes, taking into account the findings of self-evaluations reports and external evaluations reports.

The Council also creates a Senate for evaluations that will set up and guide the external evaluations procedures. A special unit within the Ministry of Higher Education will provide administrative assistance to the Council. As evaluation body, the Council:

- monitors, assesses and assures the quality of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, their study programmes as well as research, artistic and professional work
- determines the criteria for monitoring, assessment and assurance of quality of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, study programmes and research, artistic and professional work,
- co-operates with higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges and stimulates self-evaluations,
- co-operates with foreign accreditation institutions or bodies,
- organises training of external evaluation commissions,
- publishes reports on individual external evaluations and analyses them, prepares and publishes annual national reports.

The Senate performs the following tasks during the evaluation procedure:

- collect and analyses the self-evaluation and external evaluation reports,
- prepare the professional basis and conduct the external evaluation procedure,
- nominate the member of the external evaluation expert committees,
- direct and report on the external evaluation procedure and initiate the start of the self-evaluation. (National Bologna Report 2005-2007)

At institutional level procedures for quality assurance system have been developed gradually. The annual self-evaluation reports of higher education institutions were prepared by the institutions' specialized committees, and then the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission collected and published them in the form of a national evaluation report. External evaluation was usually initiated by the higher education institutions and accomplished

by the European University Association (EUA). The international dimension of quality assurance was strengthened by that the National Commission participated in the ENQA and CEE Network. Nonetheless, there was a need to establish a regular external evaluation procedure which was partly regulated by the above mentioned law. (Bologna National Report 2005-2007, 14) Deficiencies related to external and internal evaluation were also underlined by the reports of the European University Association. In 2006 first four pilot institutional external evaluations were performed that, among others, also tested the compliance of external evaluation procedures and criteria with the ESG. In March 2007 on the final meeting stakeholders involved in external evaluation presented their opinions and views on the procedure and agreed in general with that the instruments and the way of external evaluation were appropriate. There were some suggestions, however, to improve the survey questionnaire and the site-visit protocol for further evaluations. The results of first external evaluations have been published in the Report on Building the External Evaluations System of Slovenian Higher Education Institutions. For external evaluations in 2008 a new survey questionnaire has been prepared and two training courses have been organised for all involved. Meanwhile the Council for Higher Education further analysed external evaluations of 2007 and 2008 and published the final report in the beginning of 2009. (Bologna National Report 2007-2009, 13)

Internal evaluation practices which belongs to the competence of higher education institutions went under also changes. A general problem related to internal quality of assessment was that activities within universities were not harmonized. Evaluation of quality was not reconciled at university and faculty level. It could also happen that there was no communication on this issue within the university which hampered to a wide extent to the formation of a unified system for quality assurance. (University of Maribor. EUA Evaluation Report, 2004; University of Ljubljana, EUA Evaluation Report

2007) The Council for Higher Education contributed to the development of such procedures. There are quality assessment commissions at each university that prepare annual self-evaluation reports which also include students' questionnaires. The system of self-evaluation and the methodology for self-evaluations was developed jointly by all stakeholders. The Council for Higher education collected self-evaluation reports of all higher education institutions which served as a basis for procedure of external evaluations. (Bologna National Report 2007-2009, 15)

In 2009 the quality assurance system has been upgraded by the amendment of the Higher Education Act. Further steps were necessary since according to the Decision of the Constitutional Court, issued in February 2008, the establishment of a new body for professional support to the Higher Education Council was required instead of the ministry's administration. (Tertiary Education in Slovenia, website of the Ministry of Education and Sport⁶) The Slovenian government established the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA) by its decision while the Council for Higher Education finished its work on 28 February 2010. The Agency performs professional and developmental tasks in the field of higher education and regulatory tasks for the purpose of external quality assurance (external evaluation and accreditation) in higher and tertiary vocational education. The Agency performs, as being within its original competence, tasks that are in the public interest to assure permanent, professional and independent support for quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education. (Website of the SQAA⁷)

The Agency has three main bodies: the Council, Director and the Appeal Committee. The Agency Council consists of 11 members including representatives of students (2), the Rectors' Conference (Universities) (3), private higher education institutions (2), the

⁶ http://www.mss.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/tertiary_education_in_slovenia/, accessed 10/06/2011.

⁷ <http://www.nakvis.si/indexang.html>, accessed 10/06/2011.

Government (2), higher education institutions (1), employers (1) and unions in the field of higher education (1). The SQAA Council nominates the director and Appeal Committee, accepts the quality assurance acts, makes accreditation decisions, appoints experts, accepts internal quality standards of the SQAA, accepts the cross-boarder standards, follows the ESG and accepts Work Plan and Annual Report for the SQAA. (“Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Slovenia”. Presentation by Dr Mojca Novak (Director, SQAA) on the Accession Seminar on Higher Education for Slovenia by OECD/Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Ljubljana, 26th May 2011⁸) The Agency is foreseen to play an essential role in the development of the external quality assurance system in Slovenia.

Role of students

The role of students in implementation of Bologna process has increased significantly all over Europe and became also more important. Along with European trends, level of representation of students developed also in Slovenia. Representatives of students had already sat in university senates, faculty councils and other leading bodies in the 1990s. All higher education institutions have their own students’ councils. Accordingly, students can express their views on questions concerning them. However, differences among institutions are existent and for instance the European University Association experienced surprisingly that no student participated in the work of the university senate and management at the University of Maribor between 2002 and 2004. (University of Maribor, EUA Evaluation Report 2004: 9.) Despite this, students broadened their activities. Currently, they showed serious interest and higher level

⁸ http://www.mvzt.gov.si/fileadmin/mvzt.gov.si/pageuploads/doc/dokumenti_visokosolstvo/Dogodki/OECD_seminar/03-M-Novak_OECDseminar_26-5-2011.pdf, accessed 10/06./2011.

of activity in the field of quality assurance. Among others the Slovenian Student Association organized the above mentioned conference on external quality-evaluation.

The number of bodies at national level in which students can voice their opinion and defend their interests increased significantly. In 2000 membership of the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission was expanded by student representatives so 3 of 24 members are now students. The Government established in 2001 a consultative body, the Council for Students Affairs which aims the coordinated handling of student affairs. In 2004 the membership of the Council for Higher Education was broadened which happened again in 2006. Currently, four student representatives take place in the Council of 20 members and one student sits in the senates with nine members mentioned earlier. (Bologna National Report 2005-2007)

Social dimension and life-long learning

For several years more than 60% of the age cohort enrolls in tertiary education every year. Concerning the composition of students, the research project "The system of financing tertiary education, its equity and economic efficiency" demonstrated that undergraduate and especially graduate studies are less accessible for students from families with lower income and less educated parents. Education level of parents was identified as influential factor regarding reproduction of social inequalities by the census in 2002 as well. (Bologna National Report 2007-2009) In Slovenia higher education is free for full-time students while part-time students shall pay tuition fee. Financial burdens may be further decreased by scholarships provided by the state and employers. In 2005, approximately 22.5 per cent of the scholarship was financed by the government and 18.5 per cent by the employers. Special attention was paid to stu-

dents with multiple disadvantages who are eligible for further contributions. Furthermore, students are supported in the forms of food, accommodation, health care and travel allowances (Bologna National Report 2004-2005). Despite these contributions, many students work next their studies, according to a survey made in 2005 ca. two-thirds of them. Students got tax relief on these earnings. The Government planned the adoption of a new act on scholarships in 2007 in order to combining public and private resources (Bologna National Report 2005-2007, 22). Students receive direct and indirect state financial support. Scholarships are offered on the basis of social need (54%) and study results (30%). There are also other scholarships targeting specific social groups (i.e., disabled students, students from distant places). (Bologna National Report 2007-2009, 39) According to the Bologna National report 2007-2009, 4.1% of students have some special needs. Students with high disability in constant need of personal assistance have their aid's room rent subsidised. 7% of students are married and 8% of students have at least one child. These students are offered to have "child's bed" and/or "partner's bed" subsidised.

Parents receive financial assistance in the form of family allowances (taking into account the family income) and tax relief (a lump sum amount) on their annual income for children up to 26 years of age who are either students or unemployed. (Bologna National Report 2007-2009, 39) For fostering social dimension, the Government also tried to build better communication with the employers. Nonetheless, the higher education institutions weren't very much confident regarding social benefits of the new higher education system as more than half of them did not expect much change and the majority of them thought that they took all the necessary steps for this issue. (Crosier et al. 2007, 66)

Life-long learning is an outstanding issue from various aspects in the Slovene higher education. On the one hand it is in the interest of higher education institutions to involve more generations be-

cause of the shrinking number of students in the future while on the other hand fast changing demand in the economy and the labour market make it also necessary. In order to this, they try to develop cooperation with the employers to which there used to be examples in the field of technical studies and wish to develop the necessary study opportunities (i.e. e-learning, distance learning, flexible study structure, etc.). (Bologna National Report 2004-2005) It was also an important step in the establishment of the framework for life-long learning to create the possibility of recognition previously attained education, even non-formal ones. In 2004 Criteria of accreditation of higher education and study programmes were adopted which set up a framework for recognition of prior learning. According to the Criteria, higher education institutions recognise acquired knowledge, skills and competencies that fully or partly correspond to general or subject-specific competences and requirements, set by individual study programme. Knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by both formal, non-formal and informal learning are taken into account. Nonetheless, it is to be noted that this procedure is used limitedly, mainly in case of universities enrolling part-time students who are or were employed. (Bologna National Report 2007-2009, 28-29)

Lifelong learning is also supported by flexible organization of studies by using e-learning, distance learning, etc. which are available in more and more higher education institutions. Public tenders in 2007 and 2008 for development projects of higher education institutions supported, among others, also the introduction of Bologna study programmes. In the selection procedure it was an asset if the project application included elements to facilitate flexible learning paths, modern learning methods or adjustments for disabled students (ibid., 29). A positive sign for lifelong learning is that Slovenia has the highest enrolment rate of adults aged 18-39 in tertiary education (15.5%).

Nonetheless, changes are still to come as social dimension and the promotion of groups underrepresented in higher education was mentioned as one of the main four pillars of the future higher education reform in the first draft of the new master plan (*ibid.*, 7) as well which may gain even greater significance if negative social impacts of the current economic and financial crisis will get stronger.

Relation of higher education and research

In Slovenia similarly to other European countries research is strongly linked to higher education, particularly to universities. Namely, these institutions are authorized to organize doctoral study programmes and they employ approximately one-third of the researchers. 36 per cent of the research activities are pursued by higher education institutions. However, currently the business sector is also as much significant as the former since it gives job to the 34 per cent of the researchers and provides the highest contribution to R+D (67%). The government sector employs 30% of the researchers and has a share of 19.8 per cent covering R+D expenses. In GDP ratio, private funds provided 1% contribution while public funds did 0.58%. (Bologna National Report 2004-2005, 7; Bologna National Report 2005-2007, 21; Bologna National Report 2007-2009) Nonetheless, the share of research funding in the higher education sector is, in comparison with the national research sector among the lowest in the European Union (Draft of National Higher Education Programme 5).

Research activities are organized in the frame of research groups and research centres. According to the Bologna Report of 2005, there were 255 research groups at the University of Ljubljana and 86 at the University of Maribor. Beyond these, universities but especially these two function as research centres as well. In the non-university sector 47 research centres were established from

which 18 are handled as national research institute. Considerable research activity is carried out by the business sector as well.

Taking into account the strategic importance of research for the development and competitiveness of the country, research is also fostered by the support of young researchers. Yet since 1985 the Young Researchers Programme has been working successfully, thanks to which research community got much younger in the state and public sector. After the fashion of this programme, the Young Researchers for Economy Programme has been launched in 2001 in order to increase the number of people bearing Ph.D. in business sector. (Bologna National Report 2005-2007, 21) The Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) is funding salary and material costs for young researcher for maximum of four and a half years while it also follows their career development. (Bologna National Report 2007-2009)

Despite these developments, the first proposal for the new master plan 2011-2020 includes several measures in order to further strengthen research capacity of the country. Among others it foresees stronger link between higher education institutions and research institutes, development of research infrastructure and enhanced support for research career, as well as more defined research profile for universities.

Conclusion

Since Slovenia became an independent state, the country has gone through significant higher education reforms. The process started slowly but having a look on the current state of the implementation of the Bologna reforms, it could be said that more and more articulated steps have been taken and actions put in place since 2004. The Government, the higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders got involved more actively in the frame of vari-

ous institutions and development projects which led to major changes in higher education, particularly in the field of quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and skills.

It also seems that former fragmented initiatives were replaced by more centralized and coordinated initiatives and regulations. Regular external evaluation has been introduced while internal evaluation procedures have been developed through exchange among higher education institutions. International dimension and mobility got also increased attention in this period. Despite these advancements, there is still a great need for further reforms as stated also in the last Bologna National Report and the draft Master plan 2011-2020. Among others, in order to enhance better employability of students, it is inevitable to strengthen cooperation and link between higher education institutions and economic sectors both regarding the content of study programmes and research activities. In many cases evidence-based changes haven't been possible since reforms introduced in this paper will have just led to tangible and measureable results and consequences nowadays. Therefore, it is very important to pay attention to collection and analyses of appropriate information and data which are the very bases of a new wave of reforms.

This aspect is extremely important since the new reform plans included in the first draft already mentioned in this paper foresees very comprehensive actions and goals related to four pillars (1. diversification of types and missions of higher education institutions and study programmes; 2. internationalisation; 3. quality, which is crucial for internationally comparable and recognised higher education, employability and mobility of graduates, both within Europe and worldwide; 4. social dimension, which will allow equitable access to higher education and conditions for completion of studies [draft National Higher Education Plan 2011-2020, 7]) which needs careful implementation and follow-up. As Slovenia is in the first phase of the realization of these reforms, proper bases of monitoring and evaluation need to be prepared as well.

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The Bologna Process in the Ukraine

Klára Kovács

In this study¹ our objective is to outline and analyse the steps, processes and measures which preceded, followed and influenced the implementation of the Bologna model in Ukraine. As every post-socialist country, Ukraine has been faced also various challenges as a consequence of the political transformation in terms of economic restructuring, facing of capitalism and joining the global economy in order to the country would be attractive for foreign investors. However, for this there was a need for a supportive social, economical and political climate and security. Accordingly, those who were in charge of education as one of the sub-systems of the society, and one of the most important driving forces also had a high responsibility. They had to create an educational system which radically breaks with the Soviet traditions, transmits practical and theoretical knowledge, which is acknowledged and can be used in Western Europe and globally, not only in the Soviet republics.

In our study we would like to expose the characteristics and problems which characterize the higher education system of Ukraine. We wish to do this in relation to the Bologna process. By doing so we try to present the accented differences which make the higher education system of Ukraine (or in a wider sense that of post-socialist countries) distinctive from the higher education system of other European countries.

With presenting and analysing the necessary measures, laws, orders we hope to be able to show the difficulties and problems which Ukraine, as a twenty-year-old, young nation state had to and

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perhaps has to overcome in order to catch up with the educational system of developed, Western democracies.

Twenty years of the political transformation in Ukraine – a nation state on the border of Russia and the European Union

In order to interpret the implementation of the Bologna process properly it is necessary to analyze the social, economic and political processes which had an impact on the education system. Ukraine, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, gained independence in 1990. The declaration of the independent Republic of Ukraine is dated to August 24, 1991. As we mentioned in the introduction, the break was accompanied with a lot of difficulties (e.g. the governance of a multi-party system based on democratic principles, the transition to the market economy etc.), which still make their influence felt up to the present days. Establishing the new political and economic structure, privatization and elimination of the remnants of the old system are going on even today. To overcome the crisis the functioning of the country could not be completely made independent from the “Big Brother” Russia, which means economic-political dependence.

After the fall of the iron curtain frontiers became more open, though in order to enter several Western European countries there is a need for visa, but even with this the possibilities are better. Similarly, to other post-socialist countries Ukraine also got an opportunity to establish connection with such international organizations as NATO and economic groups (EEA), and after a while to be a member of them. Nowadays the foreign policy of Ukraine is bi-directional: on one hand it strives to be in good relation both with EU and Russia, on the other hand in order to keep its independence it tries to maintain quite a distance from them. From the point of view of our topic the educational system, and within this the higher

education of Ukraine is the most important. On this area we can see that Ukraine adjusted itself to the Western European trends, and as one of its most important steps it decided to adopt the structural model named after the city of Bologna and accept the Bologna Declaration and the basic principles published at the follow-up conferences (Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London, Leuven). Those in charge of higher education understood that education is one of the most determining factors of the intellectual, cultural development of humanity and maybe the most important instrument to realize independence, sovereignty and a successful democracy in Ukraine. The quality of education may have never had such social, economic and technical importance than in the past few years. That is the reason why Ukraine marked out the most important principles such as (1) creating the environment necessary for the innovation, which would be realized with the professionals working in education and science; (2) the adaptation of the norms, standards and principles of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) into the Ukrainian higher education system; (3) they must take the social context (social justice, responsibility, human values etc.) into consideration when defining the objectives of higher education (Higher Education Reform In Ukraine and Bologna process).

The perspective and concluding remarks of Hrubos et al. (2003) on post-socialist countries characterizes Ukraine too. The main point of this is that in these countries higher education experienced a radical change in its content and structure, thus the system before the Bologna-reform seemed the least rigid. The structural transformation of higher education and the moving towards the Bologna-pattern was going on in parallel with the social-economic changes. In the modernization of the Ukrainian higher education one of the most important objectives was getting rid of the Soviet traditions – strongly interwoven by socialist ideology – in education, and the principle of national education in order to strengthen the Ukrainian identity. After the political transformation it was

necessary to eliminate the remnants of the socialist system, and as a first step the directives of the education functioning. On the basis of new, democratic principles new frameworks were elaborated and established at the I. Congress of Ukrainian Pedagogues, which was held on 23-24 December, 1992. One of the most important achievements was accepting the state-controlled, national program of the education entitled *Ukraine in the XXI. Century* (Orosz 2005, 37). The first chapter contains the priorities, the most important strategic tasks and principles of the educational reforms. In the subsequent parts we can read about the national education as the main duties to be realized as a result of the Ukrainian statehood, about the content of the education, the basic principles of the public education, vocational training, higher education, military training, post-gradual education and about the construction the informal and non-formal education.

There is granted a special importance to the higher education institutions and the implementation of the new structural models. The most vital objectives are as follows: (1) democratizing the institutions, (2) making use of the possibilities of higher education in continuous training. With regard to structural issues the higher education policy has been initiated the integration of the institutions, which was realized by merging universities, colleges, specialized institutes and lyceums. The expansion of the institutional network have been occurred in one hand through the establishment of small, highly specialized institutions (e.g. in law, finances, accounting), and in other hand through affiliated departments and university colleges established in peripheral regions and settlements in terms of higher education access. The policy argumentation behind these measures consists from the improvement of regional and social equality regarding the access to higher education. The expansion of the higher education system in this way created a highly fragmented institutional network, which subsequently becomes the target of integration policies. We have to note that the political argu-

mentation behind the integration of institutions has been suggested that these initiatives are required due to the complete elimination of the socialist remnants, and the integration to the European Union and European Higher Education Area. However, as one can observe the reforms were guided mainly by the efficiency and financial concerns, where the reference to the external powers and to the socialism simply served the legitimation of these interventions. For the decision-makers it seems important that Ukraine should establish institutions jointly with higher education institutions of other countries, where as many foreign professors would be employed as possible. They wish to support exchange of students and foreign study trips of Ukrainian students. Furthermore, it can be read in the reform program that organizing the mobility of higher education researches and ensuring the international recognition of degrees are also held to be important. Post-gradual training there means further training, retraining, doctoral education following higher education. The scholarly and professional development, the high achievements and the creating of necessary conditions for this are of main importance. A further aim is the accurate defining the authority and work of doctoral councils which decide about awarding scholarly titles.

As for the area of international relations, the integration of Ukraine into the international educational, scholarly and cultural life and strengthening the ethical norms of the international dialogue are considered to be vital. Working out the effective mechanisms that contribute to the participation of the country in international programs is also important, as well as mutual agreements about the regular exchange of the research fellows and pedagogues, assuring economic and legal protection of the people who make the journey (Orosz 2005, 37-44).

The characteristics of the Ukrainian educational system

The *Higher Educational Law of Ukraine no. 2984-III* (2010), which is based on the *educational law of USSR (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)*, differentiates the following educational institutions of higher degree: vocational school, technical high school, professional college, institute, university, conservatory, academy (Figure 1). These can be ranked into four categories during the accreditation procedure. The comprehensive higher education institutions, which are running programs in every level and in various study areas, are at the top of Ukrainian higher education hierarchy. The institutions with different ranks are distinguished from each other according to the qualification granted, and by the academic qualifications of teaching and research staff:

1. Institutions accredited Rank I are general vocational and technical high schools providing vocational training and final examination.
2. Institutions accredited Rank II are various colleges (college, professional college), affiliated faculties and institutions with similar classification.
3. Institutions with Rank III and IV are institutes, universities, conservatories and academies depending on the result of the accreditation (Orosz 2005, 54-59).

However, the law does not state how to share the resources among the institutions of education, thus many times illegal tools are also applied during the accreditation, such as corruption, illegal lobbying etc. (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 185). The first rank consists from post-secondary small and highly specialized institutions, which are designed to provide vocational education finishing with the Junior Specialist diploma. These degrees have to provide qualifications for the supply of lower occupational tasks (e.g. assistants pharmacist), since the knowledge for higher positions could be acquired

only in higher education. The training time is usually 1-3 years. One can apply for admission to Professional college after finishing technical high school. The name “specialist” means a basic, beginner expertise in a certain vocation (Shynkaruk, no date of publ., 13). The recognition of studies from these programs in the case of further training varies according to the study area and the individual institutions. If someone continues his/her studies in the same or similar area, than these studies mostly are recognized and exist the possibility of developing an individual schedule. The colleges and affiliated faculties from the second rank are comprised from medium size institutions, which are providing professional and vocational education in various levels according to their accreditation (e.g. at Junior Specialist and some of them even Bachelor level).

The third and four rank consists from small, monodisciplinary university-level institutions and large scale, traditional universities offering programs from low to advanced levels. The institutes are institutions providing a higher degree, which ensure professional training for the students having a secondary school-leaving exam. The study length is usually 4-5 years. The universities ensure professional and scientific education for the students having a secondary school-leaving exam, where training time is 5-6 years (Orosz 2005, 54). The institutes deal with training professionals and their completion means Junior Specialist or Bachelor qualification. After finishing universities and academies students can achieve a Bachelor, Specialist and Master qualification. They prepare students for post-gradual trainings, in the course of which they can do the work of a researcher and researcher-pedagogue, and they can acquire an academic degree (Shynkaruk no date of publ., 13). Conservatories give higher degree on the field of music and arts.

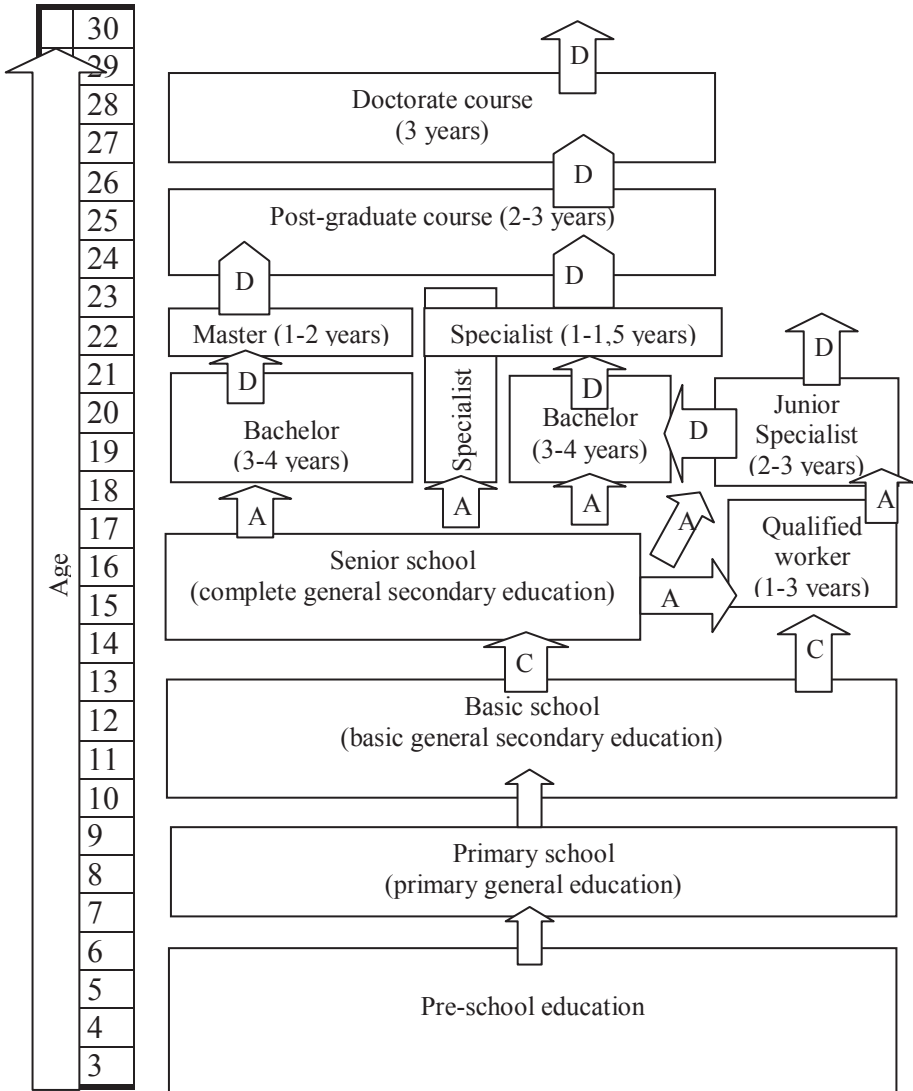
The functioning of foundational and private institutions is rather confusing, since most of them do not even have the licence of practice issued by the Ministry of Education and Science either. The provided trainings in the most cases give legal, economic, fi-

nancial and accounting qualification. (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 187). At present there 208 such institutions. As we discussed at the beginning of the subchapter, the main difference between the institutions having different ranks is that with certain accrediting rank only certain qualification can be given. The *Law of Education of Ukraine* (1996) declares that Junior Specialist qualification can be issued by the accredited institutions having Rank I (vocational and technical high schools) after secondary school-leaving exam on a minimum 2-year training. Bachelor qualification can be given by accredited institutions having at least Rank II (colleges, professional colleges) to students participating in an at least 4-year training. Specialist and Master qualification can be acquired by the students of accredited institutions having Rank III-IV (institutes, universities, academies) on a 4-6 year training in the earlier case and within 5-6 years in the latter case. (Orosz 2005, 60).

With regard to the Specialist degree we have to make some notes. The initial implementation of the two-cycle structure has been preserved in the second cycle the previously existing model of two study tracks (Master and Specialist) and post-bachelor stage. Recently, this arrangement started to change. The Ukrainian higher education system switches to the uniform second cycle, namely there will be awarded only Master degrees. As a result today is present behind each other the old (Master and Specialist) and the new structure (uniform Masters) in some study areas.

There are two types of Masters (MA and MSc) in the second cycle, where previously in the Master of Science programs existed the Specialist degree, which functions nearly as a third stage in higher education. The students in these programs according to their achievements receive MSc or Specialist degree. In addition, the Specialist functions also as a post-bachelor stage. The various documents are not clear either where this degree should be put in the two-level system.

Figure 1: The structure of the system of education in Ukraine



Note: C – Certificate
(School-leaving certificate)

A – Attestation

D – Diploma

Source: Shynkaruk, no date of publ., 8.

We can find contradictions even within one document. In the document entitled *Ukraine's National Report On the Implementation Of The Bologna Process*” (2006, 2–3), in the chapter of the training systems it is clearly stated that every student from the institutions with III-IV accreditation continues his or her studies in the two-cycle system (beginning from the school year of 2006-2007), while a few chapters later we can read that as far as the second level is concerned there is some kind of cleavage related to the programs satisfying scholarly and professional criteria. To resolve this, there is a post-bachelor program within the Master of Science program, which is called Specialist program. Its main aim is to pass on practical knowledge and qualification. It is probably related to the following: the mission of universities has changed in the XXI. Century, the institutions put more and more emphasis on the demands of the surrounding society and especially those of the labour market (Hrubos et. al. 2003, 98). The Specialist qualification means possessing some kind of special, professional knowledge in the given branch of science, and the main aim of its creation is to satisfy the demands of the labour market. After acquiring Master and Specialist degree one can apply for postgraduate courses. The main difference between the two is that with Master qualification it is possible to teach in institutions of higher education too (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 200).

Aspirantura means three years of training time in one of the doctoral schools of the university or academy, which ends with receiving the title of candidate after defending the dissertation. The doctoral training does not mean actual learning process, but a preparation for acquiring doctoral degree. The requirement for this is writing and defending a dissertation in the presence of an academic board. The *Law of Education of Ukraine (2010)* states that the titles of the candidate (C.Sc.) and doctor (D.Sc.) of science are awarded by the specialized boards of scientists of the institutions of higher education according to a well-defined procedure. The pre-

sent Minister of Education of Ukraine, Dmitro Tabacsnik, recently announced that he would submit a modification motion to unify the scholarly titles. Among the post-gradual trainings we can also find mastering new professions based on a basic qualification, expanding knowledge gained during the bachelor training, acquiring a second degree, which all can be done in various institutions of higher education and further training, retraining or scientific research centres. (Orosz 1995, 140-141).

On the way to Bologna

According to Rácz, the number of students applying for higher education in Ukraine doubled in the 90s. In 2004 13% of the employable population had a college or university degree. According to various surveys the lifestyle of the students is more and more similar to that of Western-European students. (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 188). The government of Ukraine before joining the Bologna process introduced several reform measures, with the aim of creating the conditions essential for joining the EHEA. The order no. 49 issued in 2004 by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine entitled “*Order on the actions necessary to realize the basic principles laid down in Bologna Declaration in the higher education of Ukraine and in science in the academic year of 2004-2005*” set the following objectives:

- working out methodological materials, documents;
- creating regional centres in the following cities: Dnyiproperovszk, Donyeck, Ternopil, Kijev, Lviv, Odessza, Harkiv;
- forming norms for the educational experts to introduce the credit system;
- elaborating the standards in accordance with the Bologna process;

- defining the tasks which help the students to become professionals and to find employment on the labour market;
- analysing the experiences of the national and foreign credit systems;
- making informational materials about European Credit Transfer System (ECTS);
- scientific-methodological conferences, organizing seminars for the people working in education;
- creating Diploma Supplement in compliance with the European standards;
- working out a system to assess the performance of the students objectively, which is in accordance with the methods determined by the Bologna process;
- working out an objective method to measure the quality of the Ukrainian higher education;
- creating a website that can be accessed from the homepage of the Ministry of Education and Science (MON), where one can get to know the most important documents dealing with higher education in Ukrainian, Russian, English, French and German;
- redefining the accredited programs with regard to the characteristics of the country and the criteria of the Bologna process into consideration;
- working out the steps of the process needed for the accreditation;
- making a database, in which the information on the institutions and their accreditation are available;
- developing the monitoring system examining the quality of the education;
- redefining the bilateral agreements (with Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary);
- preparing bilateral agreements with other countries that follow the Bologna model (Kremen 2005, 342-349).

In 2004 several conferences and seminars were held for the researchers, experts and faculty staff working in higher education, where the most important principles of the Bologna-process were introduced to the participants. The most significant representatives of the institutions of higher education got together, and they could get to know the European trends, the characteristics of the Bologna-type model, current issues and discussed the possibilities how the principles could be adapted in Ukraine. They could get informed about the problems and perspectives of ECTS, the conditions and things to do which are necessary for the introduction of the Bologna-process (Dopovidna zapiszka, no date of publ., 2).

Joining the Bologna process

After the preparations Ukraine was represented in Bergen, at the meeting of the Ministers of Education of European countries in May 2005, and at the end of the meeting Ukraine also signed the Bergen Declaration. With this Ukraine joined the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). At the conference the objectives were formulated, which would have to be realized until 2007 (until the conference in London) so that EHEA could be born by 2010. One of the most important issues is the development of the social welfare of students and eliminating the obstacles of mobility; following the standards and initiatives created on behalf of quality assurance; defining the national qualification system; creating flexible learning conditions, including and acknowledging previously acquired knowledge (Strategija..., no date of publ., 7). In order to realize this several orders were issued in 2005, among which the *Order no. 774* from 2005 stands out, which deals especially with working out and introducing the credit system in the academic year of 2005-2006 in the institutions of higher education ranked III-IV. Before this those who are concerned (rectors, instructors etc.) must

be acquainted with the elements of this. It is to be remarked that in Ukraine there was a credit system in the previous era too (after the break), if somebody got through a subject successfully, he or she could acquire 1 credit for this. The ratio of the national credit and the one used in ECTS is 1:1 (Higher Education Reform..., no date of publ., 24). The so-called “zalikovij” credit was introduced during the reform as a unit meant to assess the performance of the students. Every achievement accomplished in a subject unit which develops the student’s competencies must be awarded with a credit. To finish a BA/BSc course it is necessary to obtain 240 “zalikovij” credits. (Regulation no. 774).

The module is part of the training program, which serves to develop the theoretical and practical knowledge of the students (lectures, practices, seminars, labs, independent and individual tasks etc.). The module is a unit embracing a partial topic of a subject. Within the subject after the students finish a topic (module), the faculty assesses their knowledge related to the subject matter. The basis of the evaluation can be a paper, presenting a self-made assignment or even recitation. The performance is measured in credit points, which add up at the end of the term. In most cases the maximum score available is 100, at the final counting the points coming from different modules are added up, and their percentage will be the final assessment. There are four kinds of grades in use: excellent, good, pass and fail. If a student reaches a certain number of points (usually 50%), he or she does not have to take an exam at the end the term. However, the criteria for acquiring the points are not well formed. *“For lack of a unified credit system the given institutions of higher education can interpret the requirements of the credit system as they think, adjusting their own curriculum web and module system to it. This is the reason why the requirements of different universities and colleges show a diverse and varied picture, which means that their penetrability can also be questioned presently”* (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 193.)

This evaluation framework is mentioned as credit-modular system in certain documents, which can be regarded as Ukrainian equivalent of ECTS, but it does not totally correspond with the European standards. According to Raskevics (2010) it was a mistake to introduce the credit-modular system instead of ECTS, since the latter has some 20 years of past in other EU countries, so there is an adequate amount of information available about its advantages and disadvantages.

The above mentioned *Regulation no. 774* puts a special emphasis on working out the individual syllabus, which is also closely connected to the issues of ECTS. The individual syllabus determines the normative conditions of learning, and at the same time it gives a certain kind of options to choose from and prepares the students for a further learning, even for life-long learning. The order states that since the individual syllabus provides information about the study performance of the student, thus the use of a mark book is not compulsory. In the test phase, however, it is recommended to use a mark book besides the individual syllabus.

In reality individual syllabus means that on the one hand there are some subjects, which are obligatory for everyone and provides a theoretical-historical overview of the given topic, on the other hand students may go deeper in a topic and this is realized through individual consultations with the faculty of the given subject. The subject matters and the timetables for a semester are defined by the instructors. For instance at the Department of Accountancy and Finance of the Kiev National University of Economics it was done in the following way: in the first place the courses on the general theories of the functioning of financial and business organizations, companies are held, then in the second round the student can choose in which topic he or she would like to become immersed during seminars and workshops. (Oszadcsij, no date of publ.).

After joining the Bologna process

After the decision to join the Bologna-model in 2006 it was created the organization called *National Team of Bologna Promoters in Ukraine* by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the members of which are the experts of the most important institutions of higher education. The members took part in the seminars and conferences organized by EHEA, where they dealt with the following problematic issues of higher education: (1) quality assurance (QA) (2) the three-cycle system of education (3) the system of quality assurance in EEA (Higher Education Reform, In Ukraine and Bologna process, no publ. date, 18). The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine established the *All-Ukrainian Council of Students* organization. Its representatives became the candidates of National Union of Students in Europe in 2006, and members with full powers in 2007. The *Law of Ukraine on Education* from the year of 2006 declares that students can create bodies within the institutions of higher education that represent their interests, ensure the active participation in decision-making and in answering the questions related to everyday life and finding employment on the labour market. In the academic year of 2006-2007 ECTS was introduced in every institution of higher education ranked III-IV.

The so-called *National Report on the Implementation of Bologna-process In Ukraine* was made for the London conference of the ministers of European countries (Strategija..., no date of publ., 7). In the *National Report* (2006) besides the above mentioned achievements we can read that the institutional structure of the Ukrainian higher education was represented by 232 public and 113 private institutions in 2006. 100% of the students continue their studies in the two-cycle model, except for the medical and veterinarian faculties. However, we see some kind of contradiction in this document with regard to Specialist qualification. While it keeps referring to the two-cycle model, it mentions that this post-

bachelor program is realized within the Master training, which tries to solve the tension between academic and vocational, practice-oriented education. It does not specify the exact place of Specialist qualification in the two-cycle system. All of this is further complicated because it mentions the third level including the doctoral programs, but it is not clear how students with Specialist degree can enter the doctoral training. Gabóda et al. (2008, 201) predicted that in the near future the four-level higher education would be turned into a two-level one (without the doctoral training). This seemingly slowly will be implemented. In the academic year of 2005-2006 the percentage of the students with Bachelor degree being able to find employment on the labour market was 13.9% altogether, which is quite a great problem. The government definitely wants to increase this figure, but we do not know what tools they wish to employ to accomplish this. The percentage of those who continued their studies and entered the second level was 81.8%.

About the third level we can say that compared with the number of students being on the second level, their percentage barely exceeded 2%. The content of doctoral programs contains both interdisciplinary subject units (lectures, seminars etc.) and individual research work. Credits can be acquired on the basis of work load and performance. The requirement for the mobility between program levels is simply the accomplishment of these subject units, which give the possibility for a student to continue his or her studies on the next level. It is argued that the doctoral education it lags behind the transformation of other levels of higher education. The “remnants” of the Soviet system still are in practice, since one can obtain two degrees after completing it: the candidate of science and the doctor of science, and the requirements needed to acquire them are not clear. (Bolonyzskij procesz v Ukrajini..., no date of publ.). Having PhD degrees acknowledged abroad is a long and complicated process, which corresponds to a kind of “second defending”. First 12 kinds of documents must be collected and presented to the

State Qualifying Commission, and when these are accepted, the Committee appoints another committee consisting of 2-3 experts of the given field, which evaluates the dissertation and gives an opinion on it. On the basis of the candidate's answers given to the questions of the committee they decide whether to accept or refuse the dissertation (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 201).

In order to develop quality assurance system a body within the State Accreditation Commission was created whose most important task is to cooperate with ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). At the international conference was held on Jalta in 2007 the most important criteria of the quality assurance system were created, taking the suggestions of ENQA and the unique features of the institutions into consideration. The *Ministerial Bologna Follow-up* workgroup was already established in 2006. Ranking of institutions of higher education and the monitoring of the system are realized along international parameters and assessing aspects. Although we do not know what these assessing aspects are: which institution receives the given rank of accreditation and based on what criteria.

As far the social issues are concerned it can be said that in certain institutions of higher education has risen the number of programs, classes, courses which provide help for people coming from disadvantageous regions to prepare for school-leaving exams and higher education studies. The conditions of student hostels have improved, the grants are increased too, though they still can be regarded as low and this improvement shows a slow tendency. It is quite common that the reserves of the institutions become empty after paying out the wages and grants, and there is almost nothing for improving the state of the building or e.g. expanding the book stock of the library (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 185) There have been steps in order to develop distance learning, and some universities have created affiliated departments in certain regions so that they can hold classes and consultations at the residence of the students.

The equal opportunity of disabled students is however still not really sorted out. They can study at the “Ukraine” university established especially for the handicapped, but in a big country like this, it is not the ultimate solution, since it is inaccessible for the students living in remote counties.

As a result of the measures aiming to introduce ECTS, the exchanging of the credits has been solved, so a student with a Bachelor degree can continue his or her studies at any institution of higher education. However, continuing studies in other European institutions could be realized more easier only after introduction of Diploma Supplement in 2008/2009. Diploma Supplement is free and automatically comes with the degree; it is composed in a European language spoken by many and is in compliance with the formats accepted by European Union/ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In the academic year of 2005-2006 nearly 20 thousand students arrived at the Ukrainian institutions of higher education and about 30 thousand Ukrainian citizens were pursuing partial or full time studies of a foreign language or research work abroad. The foreign studies are mainly supported by the students and their families. Only by winning a ministerial scholarship is it possible to get financial support, which awarded to the most talented students (50 persons per year). This can be applied for financing studies at foreign universities or research institutes (Ukraine’s National Report... 2006, 9).

After the conference in London

After the conference held in London in 2007 the development of the quality assurance system remain a policy priority, where the accepted principles and suggestions were taken into consideration. The 612th Order entitled “*Plan of the integration of the quality assurance of the higher education of Ukraine and the European*

Higher Education Area for 2010” was accepted. In this there was established the measures which are vital for the realization of the integration of European Higher Education Area with special regard to those criteria which can be found in the London Declaration. A special emphasis is put on the further improvement of the quality assurance systems of higher education, lifelong learning, the innovative development of ECTS, improving the situation of disadvantaged students, mobility, distance learning, normative-legal regulation and the issues of financing. The order states that a national foundation called “TEMPUS” must be created with the aim of coordinating and supporting the reforms related to the Bologna-process (Plan gyij scsodo zapezpecsennya viscsoji oszviti Ukrajini ta jiji integraciji v jevropszke i szvitove oszvitnye szpivtovarisztvo na period do 2010 roku 2007).

On 4 March 2008 Ukraine became a fully powered member of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). However, it is to be remarked that the implementation of the plan needed for the joining is going very slowly. The final form of controlling and evaluating of the higher education institutions in compliance with the international standards is yet to be formed, because the present form is not clear and transparent enough. In spite of the fact that there are Accreditation Committees, which try to include the students in control and evaluation of the institutions, the publicity of the way of the accreditation processes is not properly worked out. (Bolonyzskij procesz v Ukrajini..., no date of publ.). The evaluation of the most important achievements is summarized on the Bologna scorecard. The following figure is from January 2009.

Table 1: Main Developments in the Higher Education System of Ukraine 2007–2009

Degree system: implementation of degree system	
Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle	5
Access to the next cycle	5
Implementation of national qualifications framework	1
Quality assurance: national implementation of standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA	
Stage of development of external quality assurance system	3
Level of student participation in quality assurance	5
Level of international participation in quality assurance	2
Recognition	
Stage of implementation of diploma supplement	1
National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	3
Stage of implementation of ECTS	5
Recognition of prior learning	2

Source: Bologna Stocktaking Report - 2009: country summary and the scorecard based on Ukraine's national report on the implementation of the Bologna process

Seemingly the two-cycle system, entry to the next cycle, the quality assurance of the engagement of the students and working out ECTS reached the highest score, whilst the elaboration of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and Diploma Supplement received the low scores. The high scores of the two-cycle system and entry to the next level can be the result of the fact that the two-cycle degree structure had existed before the introduction of the Bologna-model. However, the mobility between program levels was not attached to an exam, so it was enough to work out a five-year curriculum, in which the subjects were built on and complemented each other. We can see the old structure (five-year program) even today, where after completing the fourth year and writ-

ing and defending a minor thesis, students get a certificate proving their qualification. In the two study tracks at the second cycle (Master and Specialist) the entry to one or another is determined by the final exam at the Bachelor-level (e.g. high performance results in the entry to Master-programs, whilst a low result gives access only to Specialist-programs). The study performance in second cycle also have a high importance since determines if one will get a Master or Specialist diploma.

The elaboration of the ECTS got the highest value, probably because in compliance with the *Order 943* from 2009, that is “*On the Introduction of European Credit Transfer System in the Ukrainian Institutions of Higher Education*” in the academic year of 2009/2010 the ECTS was applied in every institution of higher education in Ukraine (thus also in the ones having the accreditation rank I-II). In addition Order no. 943 states that further initiatives must be formed in connection with the introduction of ECTS until the end of 2009, and a nation-wide seminar must be held for the leaders of the higher education institutions, and subsequently the monitoring of the system must be worked out until 1 June 2010.

The introduction of the new type entry system in 2008 was a very important milestone in the process of the modernization of higher education, according to which every student intending to go on studying in a higher education institution must take an advanced level final exam in Ukrainian in an independent centre providing maturity exams and entrance exams. This decision affected negatively the main national minorities, since the level of the mandatory Ukrainian language and literature subject was adjusted to the knowledge of the students finishing schools where the teaching language was Ukrainian, accordingly, the performance of minority students legs behind majority students, with Ukrainian mother tongue. In addition, in the minority programs the subject in Ukrainian is taught in a different structure and quality, generally, below the expected level. Due to this the students coming from minority

communities have a considerable disadvantage at the entrance exam. Besides Ukrainian students, they need to take a final exam from two more chosen subjects in Ukrainian, so in fact it is not the material knowledge of the students coming from minority schools that is assessed but their Ukrainian language knowledge. The order of the director of Education and Quality Assessment Centre of Ukraine can be a relief, according to which students are choosing to take final exam have the right to select from seven languages to take the exam. However several questions remained unanswered after issuing the order in connection with the advanced level final exam: it is still mandatory to take an exam from Ukrainian language and literature, on the same level as Ukrainians do. All of this can result in the students coming from minorities performing below the required level of the Ukrainian language exam, and thus they do not acquire enough points to be admitted to one of the higher education institutions or they can only get into the fee-paying training. (Gabóda – Gabóda 2008, 198-199). Only few can afford this as well as the private lessons and teachers preparing for the school-leaving exams.

The present state and problems of the Bologna process

Nowadays, in the centre of higher education debates on Bologna model in Ukraine is the following: how could the measures be implemented within national frameworks? The reform measures are implemented taking in consideration at one hand the principles of the Bologna process and in other the characteristics of the Ukrainian higher education (the organizational, quality assurance features of education, the higher education cultures, the relationship between faculty and students). In order to create the EHEA and an integrated system of higher education of participating countries there is required development and innovative answers in several

areas. Ukraine wants to implement further improvements on the following two areas:

1. working out a national strategy for social-economic development,
2. cooperation and integration with other institutions of higher education of Europe and the world.

From the documents, orders, laws analysed by us a uniform development concept evolves. This concept has its roots in the principles of the Bologna Declaration. Taking this into consideration the representatives of the government and the experts worked out a concept aiming the reforming of the Ukrainian higher education, with the introduction of the formal elements and criteria's required for joining the Bologna-process. During analysing and reading the documents we can feel as if only the positive aspects appeared. Of course the facts are obvious, so what has been introduced and realized is evident, but we do not get any information on the opinions from the stakeholders (e.g. students, academics, social partners etc.). In addition the possible problems, the negative aspects and their causes are not clear either.

Three-cycle degree structure?

One problematic area is the introduction of the two-cycle model. On one hand it is already a problem that the final goal is a three-cycle education, but the third level (doctoral), has been encountered few changes, improvements, and on the other hand Specialist degree also means a problem, which has already been discussed before. There is a wide gap in the Master programs: on one side, there are the academic programs with low practical value, and on the other side, there are the opposite (vocational, practice-oriented programs, with low academic curricular emphasis making difficult the

mobility). In addition, there is the question of who will get a Specialist degree and who will get a Master degree after the fifth year. In this question the greater part is played by the places available on the master training, the assessment of the degree, the proportion of the applicants and the financial means (since usually there are fee-paying places on the master training too). In this way the students with very good study achievements and/or with better financial background get in the master training and the others in the Specialist training.

There was a great indignation among students, when in compliance with the law no. 84 from 2007; entry to the fifth year was bound to a mandatory exam. According to Jackiv (2008) the students highlighted that after they complete four years, with a bachelor degree in their hands it is impossible to step on the labour market, since they do not find employment (less than 14% of the students with bachelor degree could get a job in 2007). In addition, the introduction of the exam is considered to increase the corruption. If quantitatively is limited the potential number of student at the Master-level, then a large student population will enter the labour market. This due to the low economic performance, that will generate unemployment and inadequate employments. Prospectively, the number of bribing and cheating on the entrance exams would grow, since the ones with worse academic achievements, but better financial background would try to ensure their place in the master training. It is considered that with the introduction of the exam the government would like to strengthen the three-cycle structure. However, in their opinion it is outrageous because if we consider the Junior specialist qualification granted by the institutions with the accreditation rank I-II and PhD training, we cannot even talk about three-cycle model. All qualifications considered the following levels can be distinguished: Junior specialist, Bachelor, Specialist or Master, Aspirant (PhD training), Candidate of Science, Doctor of Science. The attitude of the institutions is still not homogeneous as

far as the exam necessary for entering the fifth year is concerned: in certain institutions it is taken in the fourth year, while in others there is not such an exam. Besides this Raskevics (2010) argued that one of the basic objectives of the Bologna system is that every higher education system should give the students a degree with which they will start to find employment with greater chance on the labour markets of the countries of EHEA or even at any other place of the world. Accordingly to the author, the employers are not well informed on the characteristics of higher education and degrees obtainable in the new structure of different countries. There are great varieties between countries joining the Bologna process.

ECTS and mobility

The criticism (cited by Lebigy 2010) of ECTS was formulated by Raskevics, the professor of the Lviv Polytechnic National University. According to him ECTS leads to the regression of the national higher education system, as the new system of assessment does not give a real feedback about the knowledge of the students, and does not help them with systematic learning. In this way the training of professionals is endangered. The higher education is depending to a large extent to the labour market, consequently there is more emphasis on the practice-oriented training of professionals. However, this will cause that the academic researchers will leave Ukraine. The process is called “deintellectualization” in the Ukrainian education. In the background of this process, accordingly to Raskevics, there is the implementation of one of the basic elements of ECTS, the modules. As we have already presented before the sum of the points acquired in the course of the modules determines the assessment of the given subject. However, in most cases 50 points, that is 50% is enough to get a satisfactory mark (grade 3), so the exam is not necessary. In this way the students do not strive to receive better marks, they do not deepen their knowledge in the given

subject matter, since they are happy that thus the number of their exams decreases. They are able to complete the course with less effort, whilst many times they do not gain the adequate professional knowledge from such basic subjects which are vital in their future profession. As a result of this the expectation of training high-level professionals is not accomplished, which is a fundamental condition in the efficient economic cooperation of the country and European Union. Additionally, the introduction of the system means a greater workload for the faculty and the professionals working out the curriculum. The conditions of completing a module, the method of testing, its criteria must be formed precisely. At the same time an academic has 900 lessons per year on the average, which is the highest number in Europe.

The above mentioned problem is closely connected to mobility. As for the foreign studies and research work of students and faculty Ukraine rather lags behind other European countries. The proportion of “mobile” students, who are pursuing studies in a foreign country for varied duration, is presently about 10%. The situation of the faculty is even worse: only 3% of the Ukrainian universities have a connection with a research work done jointly with some foreign university, and the coordination and financing of the relations between the universities and the research work are not supported by either the institutions or the state. The joint programs and researches are mostly realized in the forms of agreements, bilateral contract of the universities. The fact that the cooperation between higher education and other branches of applied researches in many cases only exists on paper, also plays a role in the low level of research activity. We can regard the lack of financial resources allocated for researches, the lack of the integration of different organizational structures, and the inadequate level of the cooperation between the Academy of Science and industry as further obstructive factors (Bolonyjskij procesz v Ukrajinii..., no date of publ.). Verloka (2010) draws attention to the traps and difficulties of the

Bologna process in one of his writings. Accordingly, the path of the Bologna process leads between Scylla and Charybdis. The reform and harmonization of the Ukrainian higher education with the European standards grant new possibilities for the mobility of the students and faculty, the travel becomes easier, as well the knowledge-sharing between universities, countries and regions. As a result of the introduction of ECTS, the recognition of study abroad and degrees achieved mostly have been resolved (it is another question in what proportion students use these possibilities). On the other hand, however, the Ukrainian higher education had to cope with the new challenges, which other European and American higher education institutions also had faced with: losing the autonomy of the universities to a certain extent, and obtaining the resources for functioning depends largely by the market. By the cooperation of education, research and development and the industry the so-called “knowledge triangle” is born, which leads to a greater dependence of the education from the market. Thus education is forced to be more and more oriented towards the applied sciences, development and training of professionals and the scholarly research.

However, we must state that the state-owned enterprises still have an influence, which are in certain cases the most important sources of financing, and at the same time the most powerful obstacles in the way of development. Thus the battle is still fierce with the remnants of the totalitarian past – that is the state monopolies. The education on one hand tries to keep aloof from the influence of the state (Scylla) and on the other hand from the interests of the market (Charybdis). Higher education tries to make use of the possibilities provided by the Bologna process, whilst it would like to retain the principles of the Humboldtian University, especially the freedom of learning and teaching. The Humboldtian principles bear a special importance as far as Ukrainian higher education institutions are concerned, since despite the centralized governance of

several years, it was possible to create the autonomy of the institutions after the political transformation. The academic freedom has a huge role in it. Nevertheless we cannot ignore the interests of the market either, since the students coming out of the higher education will have to start to find a job and they will be in the hands of the laws of demand and supply of the market.

The social dimension and the representation of student in higher education institutions

Although more orders clearly took a stand on ensuring the right for the students and their advocacy groups (student councils) to be able to participate in the formation of the most important institutional decisions and in the implementation of the reforms related to quality assurance, but the reforms are not fully realized at all. The control of quality of the services concerning education from the students' side is by far not sufficient.

The sum of the grants (presently about 55 Euro on average, minimum wage is 80 Euro) and the standard of the hostels have barely increased lately. The student hostels infrastructure is very poor. Although distance learning exists, it is not functioning properly and not available for everyone, only for those who live in a certain distance from a higher education institution.

Also some universities have affiliated departments in other cities, where consultations and lectures are held for the students living in the region, but fewer than there would be demand for (Bolonyszkij procesz v Ukrajini..., no date of publ.).

Conclusion

Ukraine joined the Bologna process at the Bergen Conference in 2005. Prior to and following this the measures based on an elabo-

rated concept, aiming the reform of higher education took place. Its most important goal was the elimination of the remnants of socialist system and to establish a higher education system in favour of realizing the European Higher Education Area. All of this had to be implemented with regard to the European trends, norms and standards and the characteristics of the Ukrainian national and higher education culture. As a result of the reforms the three-cycle system was introduced, although it must be remarked that Bachelor and Master degrees had already existed before. The so-called post-bachelor training (Specialist degree) created a special situation within the master training, which actually is an outgoing stage. The doctoral degree is the area where we can still find elements which remained from the Soviet system; the reforms are slower in this case.

It is necessary to form the structure of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) where the demands of the labour market play an important role, especially with regard to the Bachelor-cycle, so that the young who finish the basic training and do not intend to continue their studies could get a job with a greater chance. It was a great help in resolving the questions and problems concerning quality assurance that Ukraine joined EQAR. The research activity of the universities is closely connected to this, which are undertaking only in a few higher education institutions and national collaboration is present in only 3% of the institutions. The mobility of students and faculty has increased in the past few years thanks to the participation in the Erasmus, Tempus and Tuning programs. However, the proportion of the students and faculty involved in study abroad or doing research work abroad is low. As for the social dimension, lifelong learning, the issues concerning the rights of the students we can say that there have been made measures, but it takes more time to enforce and implement these. One of the most important problem is the unfinished or lack of the monitoring system with regard to the implementation of the reform objectives. The value of the introduced formal changes and the high-sounding

modernization strategies are uncertain, if the supervision of the introduction of reform elements is not solved: the question arises whether the system works as envisioned? However, if there is a lack of such organization whose most important task is to elaborate and apply the incentives and sanctions, there is a danger that the set of objectives and principles will be nothing but well-sounding phrases. Eliminating corruption is another problem to be overcome, which completely blends the whole of Ukrainian education, and due to which on many areas (entrance exam scores, the number of the subsidized places, governance of institutions, issues of financing etc.) the financial (and even political) interest succeed.

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Abstracts

Tamás Kozma: The Bologna Process in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative View

The Bologna process is an effort of the European Union to create a European Higher Education Area. For the new member states however, the Bologna process is not only a higher education reform, rather, an element of their economic and political transformation. During the first period of the transformation process the revitalised nation-states of the region concentrated on their own national identities. The quest for national identities on the one hand and the strive for European integration is a dilemma that can only be met by strong national governments. As the national governments gained power, the civic societies (especially the 'national minorities') lost their influence which they had regained after 1990. They had developed their separate institutions and systems during the transition period which they try to protect now against the Bologna process. If they integrate into the national system, they would lose their special character; if they save their civic independence, they would lose the higher education accreditation. Is there a third way between the two options? The author suggests that alternative accreditations and recognitions would help the independent institutions to escape from that dilemma.

Voldemar Tomusk: European Higher Education Considering Gellner, Malinowski and Wittgenstein

This study positions the Bologna process in the context of a broader cultural and political integration process within Europe.

Referring to the works of Gellner, Malinowski and Wittgenstein it is being argued that the cause of a limited success in creating an European higher education system does not lie in the technical sphere, but in the complex interplay between cultures and politics on the continent. While relocating higher education from the cultural and political domains to the economic realm may appear an attractive solution to the advocates of a federal Europe, this solution ignores the cultural roots of the European university and undermines its cultural potential.

Anna Orosz: Balance of Ten Years of Reform: Changes in the Croatian Higher Education System

The Bologna process in Croatia is strongly related to the EU integration process which reached a final phase this year. Since the signing of the Bologna Declaration, the Bologna process has become an influential factor for the higher education reform in Croatia. After the legislative actions by the government, implementation of reforms (for instance, introduction of the three studylevels) has started at the level of higher education institutions. An institutional framework for quality assurance has been established and further developed. Along with changes in the study structures, current tendencies (like strengthening the binary character of higher education) imply the growing importance of accommodating higher education supply to the needs and demands of the labour market and local economies.

Věra Št'astná, Eliška Walterová: The Bologna Process in the Czech Republic

The Bologna process in the Czech Republic is a counterpart of the overall educational transformation and harmonization of

educational policy within European integration. The higher education area underwent fundamental changes since 1990. Particular changes were not only caused by the Bologna process by strategic decisions, legislatives and namely by institutional changes or quantitative growth. Attempts to diversify and restructure are going on. Major changes and new laws are expected soon.

Károly Barakonyi: Bologna Hungaricum

The focus of this study reflects on the challenges of the implementation of the Bologna process in Hungary. Although it gives a brief introduction to the initiatives and purposes of the whole process, the study neglects information and references of issues that cannot be considered novice concerning the topic. Reviewing six basic criteria the author describes the outcomes of the process achieved in Hungary till today (April, 2011) and draws attention to phenomena that lack conformity with general and concrete targets of the Bologna process.

Marek Kwiek: Social Perceptions versus Economic Returns of the Higher Education: the Bologna Process in Poland

In the present study, the Bologna process is viewed through the lenses of the end product of reform initiatives it has been promoting in the last decade: in this case, a coherent system of three degrees – the bachelor, the master, and the doctorate. And in particular, it is focused on the changing social perceptions and labor market perceptions of the bachelor degree. The increasing acceptance of the bachelor degree in the Polish labor market seems to be an indirect product of the Bologna process: in the 1990s the bachelor degree both had low social prestige and was refused as appropriate higher education credentials by the labor market. But

recent national data tend to suggest that while the social prestige of the bachelor degree is still low, its market value is quite high. Consequently, the bachelor degree may have much higher acceptance among students and graduates in the near future. The role of the Bologna process in this transformation has been substantial. There seems to be a combination of national and international forces at work which has managed to transform the national labor market position of the bachelor degree. The study is divided into the following sections: introduction; the degree structure in Poland in an European comparative context; the bachelor degree in Poland from a historical comparative perspective: legal changes and institutional transformations; the degree structure and the labor market response: review of recent empirical evidence; the bachelor degree and private higher education; and conclusions.

Éva Szolár: The Bologna Process in Romania

In the present study we analyze the Bologna process as multi-dimensional, multi-actor and multi-level political initiative. Firstly, we will present the structural and institutional development of the Romanian higher education system prior and post-1989. Secondly, there will be an analysis of the policy agenda and reform aims of the national Bologna process from structural, curricular and actor perspective. In addition, we will show how the issues of quality assurance are related to governance reforms. In our perspective the Bologna process serves as a flexible platform for the international and national policy priorities. The Romanian government attempts to use the Bologna-umbrella for initiating and implementing national comprehensive reforms. Objectives are in most cases not mentioned in the Bologna Declaration, but clearly are essential for

the introduction of degree-reform and the formation of so-called European Higher Education Area.

Irén Gábrity Molnár: The Bologna Process in Serbia: With a Special Focus on the Situation of the Higher Education of Vojvodina

Although the EU accession is a relatively distant objective of Serbia the state signed the Bologna Declaration in 2001 and committed itself to introduce reforms in harmony with the Bologna principles until 2010. Optimistic statements dominate the internal reports of the accreditation organizations referring to quality of insurance and rationalization. Everybody accepts the need of creating harmony between the European and Serbian norms of the system of higher educational institutions and quality assurance. What is also emphasized is the compatibility with the European educational systems and rationality in higher education. The ambitious reforms are met by difficulties. Practical halts and the controversial standpoints of the reform actors slow the innovating efforts, especially as a result of the following habitual ideas: The faculties wish to remain autonomous legal entities and do not want to be integrated into various professional institutions. The faculties in their communication with the state focus only on the opinion of the Minister of Education and not on that of the alternative and consulting committees. The newly founded private faculties and colleges prove to be the quickest representatives and imitators of the European educational model, who indeed fill in certain gaps, but they also set in motion the conservative institutions that are indeed afraid of competition. Words mostly stressed by the leaders of state higher education (who are against the reforms) are “autonomy” and “quality”. State universities also refer to „academic freedom” when they negotiate with the economic management, and not with the state.

Béla László: The Impact of the Bologna Process on Higher Education in Slovakia

Slovakia has been taking part in the Bologna process from its beginning. Political forces that regarded the integration into the European Union as their priority were elected in 1998. This policy and the ministerial meeting in Prague in 2001 contributed to the passing of the Law on higher education, by which the legal basis of the Bologna system was set. Educational institutions were gradually transformed into the three-level system of the higher education, and since 2005 all educational programs were in accordance with Bologna system. Since there was no duality in higher education, this process was realized without any significant political or academic conflict, or any other conflict in the society. The one-level higher educational system was transformed into two-level system without major changes and the institutions started to constitute their programs in accordance with the Bologna process quite easily. Intermediary organizations or institutions assigned to help the Bologna system come into practice, were formed. This study is dealing with this process in detail.

Anna Orosz: The Bologna Process in Slovenia

The Bologna process – though not exclusively related to the EU – composes an important part of the European integration process. As a small country, for Slovenia it is of utmost importance to develop international embeddedness of its higher education system while improving the quality of its own system. During the last decade the Slovene higher education went through constant change. Beyond legislative reforms, the necessary expert and government institutional framework has been established in order to foster a coherent implementation of the reforms. In compliance with

governments' efforts, higher education institutions have also started to implement the reforms. The reforms regard both internal and international aspects: while the Bologna process allows Slovenia to build stronger relations both with the other EU member states and non-EU countries (especially with the Western Balkans' region), quality of higher education, social issues, equal opportunity, etc. gained also attention of policy makers.

Klára Kovács: The Bologna Process in the Ukraine

In this study we aim to outline and analyze the steps, processes and measures which preceded, followed and influenced the implementation of the Bologna model in Ukraine. With presenting and analyzing the necessary measures, laws and orders we try to show the difficulties and problems which Ukraine, as a twenty-year-old, young nation state had to and perhaps has to overcome in order to catch up with the educational system of developed, Western democracies. Those in charge of higher education understood that education is one of the most determining factors of the intellectual, cultural development of humanity and maybe the most important instrument to realize independence, sovereignty and a successful democracy in Ukraine. Thus the quality of education may have never had such social, economic and technical importance than in the past few years. As a result of the reforms the three-level system was introduced, although it must be said that Bachelor and Master degrees had already existed before. The so-called post-bachelor training (Specialist degree) created a special situation within the master training, which actually is an outgoing stage. The doctoral degree is the area where we can still find elements which remained from the Soviet system; the reforms are slower in this case. One of the most important problems is the unfinished and insufficient system with regards to the implementation of the reform objectives.

Zusammenfassung

Tamás Kozma: Der Bologna-Prozess in Ost-Mittel-Europa: Eine vergleichende Perspektive

Der Bologna-Prozess ist der Versuch der Europäischen Union, einen einheitlichen Europäischen Hochschulraum zu schaffen. Für die neuen EU-Länder bedeutet der Bologna-Prozess nicht nur eine Hochschulreform, sondern er ist auch Teil ihrer wirtschaftlichen und politischen Transformation. In der ersten Phase der Umsetzung bemühten sich die neu gegründeten Nationalstaaten der Region ihre eigene nationale Identität zu schaffen. Die Bildung der nationalen Identität einerseits und das Erreichen der europäischen Integration andererseits konnten nur durch starke nationale Regierungen erfüllt werden. Nachdem diese sich gebildet haben, verlor die Zivilgesellschaft (besonders die nationalen Minderheiten) zunehmend ihren Einfluss, den sie nach der politischen Wende erworben hat. Die Minderheiten entwickelten ihre eigenen Institutionen und Systeme, und versuchten diese gegen den Bologna-Prozess zu verteidigen: Wenn diese in die nationalen Systeme integriert werden würden, verlören sie ihre besonderen Eigenschaften, wenn sie ihre zivile Unabhängigkeit bewahren würden, verlören sie ihre Akkreditierung. Gibt es einen dritten Weg zwischen diesen zwei Möglichkeiten? Der Verfasser meint, dass alternative Akkreditierung und Anerkennung den unabhängigen Institutionen helfen würden, dieses Dilemma zu lösen.

Voldemar Tomusk: Der Europäische Hochschulraum in Anbetracht der Werke von Gellner, Malinowski und Wittgenstein

Der Aufsatz positioniert den Bologna-Prozess im Rahmen der breiten kulturellen und politischen Integration Europas. Unter Bezugnahme auf die Werke von Gellner, Malinowski und Wittgenstein wird argumentiert, dass die Ursache des begrenzten Erfolgs der Schaffung eines europäischen Hochschulraums nicht in den technischen Umständen, sondern in dem komplexen Zusammenspiel der verschiedenen Kulturen und politischen Richtungen des Kontinents zu finden ist. Während die Verlagerung der Zuständigkeit für die Hochschulen aus den kulturellen und politischen Bereichen in den wirtschaftlichen Bereich als attraktive Lösung für die Verfechter eines föderalen Europas erscheinen kann, schaden diese den kulturellen Wurzeln der europäischen Universität.

Anna Orosz: Bilanz von 10 Jahren Reform: Veränderungen im kroatischen Hochschulwesen

Der Bologna-Prozess in Kroatien ist stark auf den EU-Integrationsprozess ausgerichtet, der 2011 in die Endphase kam. Seit der Unterzeichnung der Bologna-Erklärung wurde der Bologna-Prozess zu einem einflussreichen Faktor in der kroatischen Hochschulreform. Nach den legislativen Maßnahmen der Regierung startete die Umsetzung der Reformen (z. B. Einführung der drei Studienzyklen) auf der Ebene der Hochschulen, die institutionellen Rahmen der Qualitätssicherung wurden eingerichtet und weiterentwickelt. Parallel zu den Veränderungen in der Studienstruktur verweisen die aktuellen Tendenzen (wie die Stärkung des binären Charakters der Hochschulbildung) auf die wachsende Bedeutung der Anpassung des Angebots der Hochschulen an die Bedürfnisse und Anforderungen des Arbeitsmarktes und der lokalen Wirtschaft.

Věra Št'astná, Eliška Walterová: Der Bologna-Prozess in der Tschechischen Republik

Der Bologna-Prozess in der Tschechischen Republik ist Teil der gesamten Transformation des Bildungssystems und der Harmonisierung der nationalen Bildungspolitik mit den Zielen der europäischen Integration. Nach 1990 veränderte sich der tschechische Hochschulraum grundlegend. Einige Veränderungen wurden neben dem Bologna-Prozess durch strategische Entscheidungen, legislative und institutionelle Reformen oder quantitatives Wachstum verursacht. Die Diversifizierung und die Strukturveränderung sind noch im Gange, und in Kürze werden weitere wichtige Änderungen und ein neues Gesetz erwartet.

Károly Barakonyi: Bologna Hungaricum

Der Aufsatz hat das Ziel, die Herausforderungen um die Durchführung des Bologna-Prozesses in Ungarn zu schildern. Er beginnt mit einer kurzen Einführung zum Zweck dieser europäischen Initiative. Die Studie konzentriert sich auf die neuesten Ergebnisse der Forschung. Der Autor analysiert auf Grund von sechs grundlegenden Aspekten die Umsetzung des Bologna-Prozesses in Ungarn von Beginn an bis heute (April 2011). Desweiteren stellt er auch Phänomene vor, die mit den allgemeinen und konkreten Zielen des Bologna-Prozesses nicht übereinstimmen.

Marek Kwiek: Soziale Wahrnehmung versus wirtschaftliche Erträge der Hochschulbildung: der Bologna-Prozess in Polen

Der Bologna-Prozess in Polen wird hier in Bezug auf sein Ergebnis als Reforminitiative des letzten Jahrzehnts analysiert: Es handelt

sich um ein kohärentes System von drei akademischen Graden: Bachelor, Master und PhD (Doktorgrad). Die Studie konzentriert sich dabei auf die veränderte gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Wahrnehmung des Bachelor-Abschlusses. Die zunehmende Akzeptanz des Bachelor-Abschlusses auf dem polnischen Arbeitsmarkt scheint ein indirektes Produkt des Bologna-Prozesses zu sein: In den 1990er Jahren hatte er noch ein niedriges soziales Ansehen und wurde auf dem Arbeitsmarkt als nicht angemessene Hochschulbildung abgelehnt. Aber die jüngsten Daten scheinen darauf hinzuweisen, dass – während das soziale Prestige des Bachelor-Abschlusses immer noch gering blieb – sein Marktwert bereits recht hoch ist. Das heißt: der Bachelor-Abschluss wird in der nahen Zukunft wahrscheinlich eine viel höhere Akzeptanz bei den Studierenden und den Absolventen erreichen. Der Bologna-Prozess spielte bei diesen Umwandlungen eine wesentliche Rolle. Nationale und internationale Kräfte trugen gleichermaßen dazu bei, die Position des Bachelor-Abschlusses auf dem nationalen Arbeitsmarkt zu festigen. Der Aufsatz gliedert sich in die folgenden Abschnitte: Einführung, die Struktur des polnischen Bildungssystems im vergleichenden europäischen Kontext sowie der Bachelor-Abschluss in Polen aus der historisch-vergleichenden Perspektive: Gesetzesänderungen und institutionelle Veränderungen, die neue Studienstruktur und der Arbeitsmarkt: die jüngsten empirischen Daten, der Bachelor-Abschluss und die private Hochschulbildung sowie Ausblick und Schlussfolgerungen.

Éva Szolár: Der Bologna-Prozess in Rumänien

In der vorliegenden Studie wird der Bologna-Prozess als eine mehrdimensionale, mehrstufige, Multiplayer-Initiative analysiert. Erstens wird die strukturelle und institutionelle Entwicklung des rumänischen Hochschulwesens vor und nach 1989 präsentiert.

Zweitens werden die rumänischen politischen Absichten und die Reformziele im Zusammenhang mit dem Bologna-Prozess geschildert. Die Verfasserin konzentriert sich dabei vor allem auf die Maßnahmen, die sich auf die Bildungsstruktur, das Curriculum, die Qualitätssicherung und das Management beziehen, bzw. darauf, wie diese miteinander in Zusammenhang stehen. Nach Meinung der Verfasserin bildet der Bologna-Prozess eine flexibel interpretierbare Plattform für die Verwirklichung der internationalen und nationalen politischen Prioritäten. Die rumänische Regierung versucht, den Bologna-Prozess für die Initiierung und die Umsetzung umfassender Reformen zu verwenden. Sie leitet solche Reformen ein, deren Ziele in den meisten Fällen nicht in der Bologna-Erklärung erwähnt werden, welche aber aus ihrer Sicht unerlässlich zum Anschluss an den Europäischen Hochschulraum sind. Mit dem Bologna-Prozess werden also die umfassenden Bildungsreformen legitimiert.

Irén Gábrity Molnár: Der Bologna-Prozess in Serbia: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hochschulbildung in der Vojvodina

Obwohl der EU-Beitritt ein relativ fernes Ziel von Serbien ist, 2001 unterzeichnete die Regierung die Erklärung von Bologna und hat sich verpflichtet, die Reformen im Einklang mit den Bologna-Prinzipien bis zum Jahr 2010 durchzuführen. Optimistische Aussagen dominieren die internen Berichte der Akkreditierungsorganisationen hinsichtlich der Qualität der Qualitätssicherungs- und Rationalisierungsmaßnahmen. Jeder akzeptiert die Notwendigkeit der Harmonisierung der europäischen und serbischen Normen bezüglich der Hochschulen und der Qualitätssicherung. Die Kompatibilität mit den europäischen Bildungssystemen und die Effektivität der Hochschulbildung sind ebenfalls wichtige Ziele. Die Reformbereit-

schaft birgt aber auch Schwierigkeiten. Die Verfasserin bemängelt, dass die praktische Haltung und die kontroversen Standpunkte der Reformakteure die innovativen Bemühungen verlangsamten: Die Fakultäten wollen rechtlich eigenständige Einheiten bleiben und wollen nicht in verschiedene professionelle Institutionen integriert werden. Die Fakultäten fokussieren in ihrer Kommunikation mit dem Staat nur auf die Stellungnahme des Ministers für Bildung und nicht auf die Meinung von Anderen, wie z. B. der Beratungskomitees. Die neu gegründeten privaten Hochschulen versuchen dagegen die eifrigsten Vertreter und Nachahmer des europäischen Bildungsmodells zu sein. Sie füllen in der Tat die bestehenden Lücken aus, und setzen die konservativen Institutionen, die Angst von ihrer Konkurrenz haben, in Bewegung. Die am meisten betonten Worte der Leiter der staatlichen Hochschulen (Gegner der Reformen) sind „Autonomie“ und „Qualität“. Die staatlichen Universitäten verweisen auch auf die „akademische Freiheit“, wenn sie mit dem Wirtschaftsmanagement und nicht mit dem Staat verhandeln.

Béla László: Die Auswirkung des Bologna-Prozesses auf den slowakischen Hochschulbereich

Die Slowakei nimmt an dem Bologna-Prozess seit dessen Beginn teil. 1998 wurden politische Kräfte gewählt, die die europäische Integration als ihre höchste Priorität deklarierten. Ihre Politik und die ministerielle Konferenz von Prag im Jahre 2001 führten zur Verabschiedung eines neuen Hochschulgesetzes. Damit wurde die rechtliche Basis für die Umsetzung des Bologna-Systems geschaffen. Bis 2005 wurden in allen Hochschulen konsekutive, dreigliedrige Hochschulstudiengänge eingeführt. Dieser Prozess war frei von jeder politischen, akademischen oder gesellschaftlichen Diskussion. Das frühere lineare Bildungssystem wurde ohne wesentliche Veränderungen in Bachelor- und Masterstudiengänge umge-

wandelt. Diese Veränderung erleichterte die Aufgabe der Hochschulen erheblich. Es wurden intermediäre Organisationen gegründet, damit sie helfen, das Bologna-System in die Praxis umzusetzen. Mit unterschiedlichen Ergebnissen: Erstens bereiten die Bachelorstudiengänge nicht auf die Berufswelt vor, vielmehr dienen sie als Grundlage für die Weiterbildung. Die Zahl der slowakischen StudentInnen im Ausland ist viel größer als die Zahl der ausländischen StudentInnen in der Slowakei – ein klares Signal für die hohe Mobilität der einheimischen Hörschaft. Während der Umsetzung des Bologna-Prozesses (2005-2010) stieg der Anteil der StudentInnen unter den 19-Jährigen von 25% auf 60 %. Die Hochschulen wurden deshalb ziemlich überfüllt. Leider können die Bachelorstudiengänge diese Menge nicht direkt zum Arbeitsmarkt führen. Von den Defiziten der Bachelor-Studiengänge profitierten die privaten Hochschulen ebenso wie von den Vorteilen des Bologna-Systems. Die Slowakei führte das Bologna-System formell schnell und ohne nennenswerte Konflikte ein. Um dessen Ziele zu erfüllen, soll aber im nächsten Jahrzehnt noch eine breite Palette von weiteren Reformen in der Hochschulbildung und -forschung verabschiedet werden. Der Inhalt des Studiums muss einen stärkeren Praxisbezug haben. Im Rahmen des Bologna-Prozesses wurden weitere Ziele gesetzt, um die Voraussetzungen für lebenslanges Lernen zu schaffen und die Finanzierung der Hochschulen und Forschungseinrichtungen gemäß den europäischen Standards zu ändern.

Anna Orosz: Der Bologna-Prozess in Slowenien

Der Bologna-Prozess – obwohl dieser sich nicht ausschließlich auf die EU bezieht – wird als ein wichtiger Teil des europäischen Integrationsprozesses interpretiert. Als kleines Land ist für Slowenien die internationale Eingliederung seiner Hochschulbildung bzw. die Verbesserung ihrer Qualität von großer Bedeutung. Während des

letzten Jahrzehnts erlebte das slowenische Hochschulwesen einen ständigen Wandel. Neben den Gesetzesreformen wurden die erforderlichen institutionellen Rahmen (Regierungs- oder Expertenkommissionen) geschaffen, um die kohärente Umsetzung der Reformen zu fördern. Parallel zu den Regierungsmaßnahmen begannen auch die Hochschulen, die Reformen umzusetzen. Die Reformen haben sowohl interne als auch internationale Aspekte: während der Bologna-Prozess Slowenien ermöglicht, seine Beziehung sowohl zu den anderen EU-Mitgliedstaaten als auch zu den Nicht-EU-Ländern (vor allem mit dem Westlichen Balkanländern) zu stärken, erweckten besondere Ziele des Prozesses (wie die Qualitätsentwicklung der höheren Bildung, die Integration der sozialen Dimension, die Herstellung von Chancengleichheit usw.) die Aufmerksamkeit der politischen Entscheidungsträger.

Klára Kovács: Der Bologna-Prozess in der Ukraine

In diesem Beitrag werden die Schritte, Prozesse und Maßnahmen skizziert und analysiert, die der Umsetzung des Bologna-Prozesses in der Ukraine voranging, folgen und diese beeinflussen. Mit der Darstellung und Analyse von Maßnahmen, Gesetzen und Verordnungen versucht die Verfasserin, die Schwierigkeiten und Probleme aufzuzeigen, die die Ukraine, ein 20-jähriger, junger Nationalstaat hatte und vielleicht bereits schon lösen konnte, um sich dem Bildungssystem der entwickelten, westlichen Demokratien anzuschließen. Für die Verantwortlichen der höheren Bildung ist Bildung einer der bestimmenden Faktoren der geistigen, kulturellen Entwicklung der Menschheit und vielleicht das wichtigste Instrument, um Unabhängigkeit, Souveränität und eine erfolgreiche Demokratie in der Ukraine zu verwirklichen. Die Qualität der Bildung hatte der zufolge vielleicht noch nie eine so große soziale, wirtschaftliche und technische Bedeutung wie in den vergangenen Jah-

ren. Als Folge der Reformen wurde das dreistufige System eingeführt. Es muss jedoch bemerkt werden, dass Bachelor- und Masterabschlüsse bereits früher existierten. Die so genannte Post-Bachelor-Ausbildung (mit dem sog. „Spezialisten-Abschluss“) hat eine besondere Stelle innerhalb der Master-Ausbildung. Das Promotionsstudium (PhD-Studium) ist der Bereich, der noch Elemente aus dem sowjetischen System beinhaltet, die Reformen sind in diesem Fall langsamer. Eines der wichtigsten Probleme ist der Mangel oder die Unterentwicklung des Monitoring-Systems, was gerade ein wesentliches Ziel des Bologna-Prozesses wäre.

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